

# *Red Moon Rising*

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*The Rapture  
and the  
Timeline of the Apocalypse*

Peter D. Goodgame

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*Red Moon Rising –  
The Rapture and the Timeline of the Apocalypse*  
by Peter D. Goodgame

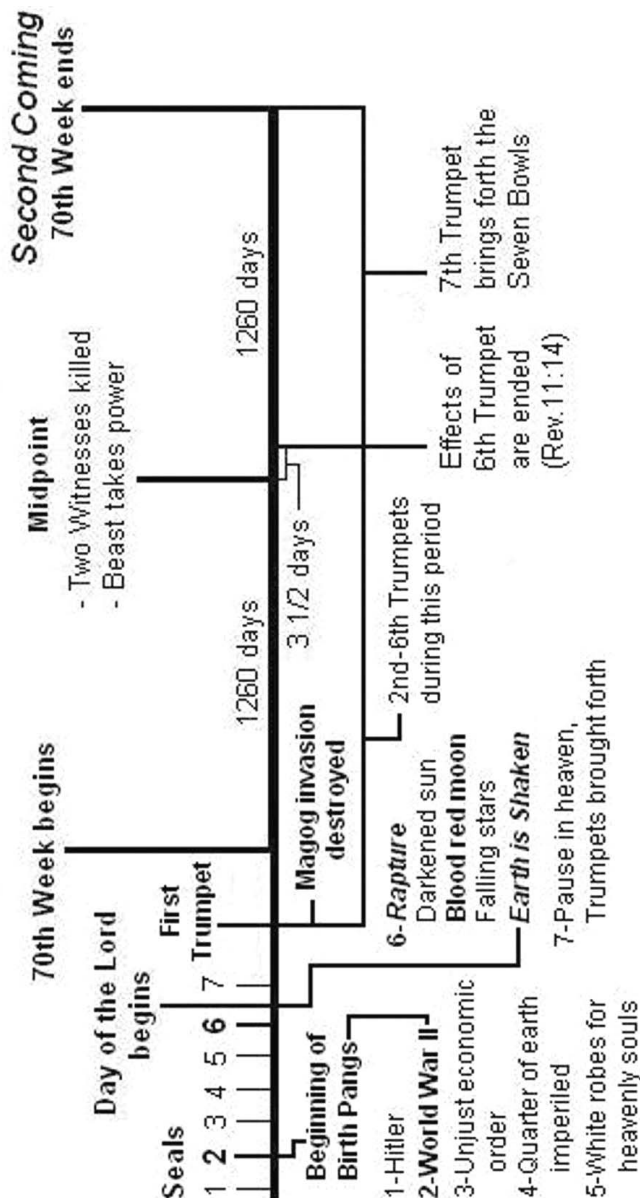
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## The Red Moon Rapture Timeline





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# Introduction

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## “Jesus Is Coming Soon.”

**S**o reads a faded sign that is mounted high above a dilapidated old church on a street that leads into Honolulu from the north. I was giving my good friend a ride to work, and though I saw the sign as we passed by I ignored it. My friend did not. He spoke the words softly: “Jesus is coming soon,” and then he chuckled cynically. We were both bachelors and we both liked to party. We shared an interest in sports and politics and in the pleasures of wine, women and song, and so he assumed that I viewed Jesus just as he did. He came from a secular background and true to his training he saw Jesus as a figure that was certainly irrelevant to his future. I came from a Christian background, and after years of ignoring the question of Christ and pursuing my own goals I was slowly, often against my will, being brought back to face that Question. At that point in my life, many years ago, I could not chuckle at the idea of Jesus coming back. I merely smiled nervously and quickly changed the subject.

This book is in part a belated response to my friend’s self-assured disbelief at the thought of Jesus ever coming back. I consider his response to the sign above the church as representative of society as a whole. We are taught that God

is unnecessary when it comes to explaining the origins of mankind and even of the universe itself, and therefore the most Jesus can ever be is a mythological example of self-sacrifice and moral integrity. We are taught that Jesus was a positive figure, to be sure, but those who make him out to be more than that are going overboard and are becoming increasingly more of a danger to society than they are a help.

In the years that have passed since driving by that sign on the road I have found out for myself that the message on the sign is anything but irrelevant. It is the one great Hope of humanity, and the most important Promise that God ever made to us. However, over the centuries, as the Christian worldview has been replaced in the West by the secular worldview, this Promise has come under attack. From criticizing the reliability of the Bible, to the historicity of Jesus, to questioning the true beliefs of early Christians, a huge wall of prejudice has been erected that keeps many people from taking the claims and promises of Jesus seriously.

Today the mainstream media plays a major role in keeping that wall intact. *Time*, *Newsweek*, and even PBS have all approached the topic of the Second Coming and the final judgment, and their articles and documentaries have been marked with a sensationalist, patronizing fascination. They *appear* to do their best to explain to the uninformed what Christians believe, but in the end they leave their audience with the feeling that Bible prophecy can be safely rejected as hopelessly convoluted and irrational.

For the secular world this is a very comfortable and logical conclusion, but this book will show that it is not an *honest* conclusion. Bible prophecy *can* be presented as an incomprehensible jumble of contradicting predictions, strange symbols and mystical visions, *if that is the agenda*. But on the other hand Bible prophecy can also be understood in a completely rational and systematic manner.

This book will reveal that if the proper foundation is

laid, and if the framework is then assembled according to the Bible's own simple instructions, then the prophecies of the Bible combine to create a virtually seamless and unified structure. This unity and clarity exists despite the fact that the individual predictions were given in stages separated by hundreds of years and through scores of different authors. Together the messages make sense because each prophet had but one Source, a divine Source that exists outside of time and space that knows the future before it happens. This is my perception of Bible prophecy, and my task in this book is to show how I can have such faith in it.

For the non-Christian my belief in the unity and clarity of Bible prophecy is probably viewed with curiosity and disbelief. One of the greatest embarrassments to Christians who try to convince people that Bible prophecy is relevant to today is the fact that within the Christian Church there are many different viewpoints regarding the proper way to understand the Bible's prophecies. From the outset the skeptic is given a pretext to dismiss the entire subject using the excuse that "If Christians cannot agree among themselves what the prophecies mean, then why should I spend any time trying to understand them for myself?"

This is a very good argument, but perhaps it can be addressed by first defining what is meant by the term "Christian Church." These days, when people focus on that term there is a great deal of negative imagery that surrounds it. People immediately think of the Middle Ages and of the all-powerful Papacy, of the Crusades and the Inquisition, and of themes such as intolerance, rigid dogmatism, persecution, greed, fraud, hypocrisy, combined with naked political ambition. Why is this the case? Why is Jesus himself still viewed by the mainstream in a relatively positive light, but those who have claimed to be his followers, and the movement that became his legacy, is now viewed in hindsight in such a negative light?

The answer is that what we call the “Christian Church” is actually made up of two related parts. The major part we can refer to as the “Visible Church.” This part of the Church is made up of every human being down through the ages who has *claimed* to be a Christian and a follower of Jesus Christ. The Visible Church therefore includes the various Christian denominations and all the kings and leaders throughout history who have claimed to teach, guide and rule in the name of Jesus. The Visible Church is “visible” because its existence is tangible and self-evident — we can identify for ourselves all of those who outwardly claim to be Christians.

The problem, however, and the way in which Christianity can come under a great deal of legitimate criticism, is that not everyone who *claims* to be a follower of Jesus Christ is in fact baptized in the Spirit and born again, and dedicated and devoted to Jesus and to his teachings. The Visible Church has always been more of a political animal than a spiritual force for good, because it has always been open to subversion from people who outwardly claimed to be followers of Jesus, who instead committed acts contrary to his teachings and promoted their own agendas. The great tragedy of Christian history is that under the cover of the Visible Church, and in the very name of Jesus Christ, countless evils have been committed over the centuries.

Although the Visible Church can be criticized as a hypocritical and materially-focused institution, there exists within it the second and minor part of the Christian Church that we can refer to as the “Invisible Church.” We can also call it the “True Church,” because this is the institution that the Apostle Paul refers to as the mystical “Body of Christ” on earth. It is the diverse assembly of dedicated and genuine believers who have received forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus and have been made spotless and clean in God’s sight. Members of this portion of the Christian Church claim

to be followers of Jesus Christ and indeed they are, *to the very core of their being*. However, this Invisible Church is “invisible” to human eyes because the true status of any individual’s soul is a secret known only by that specific person and God Almighty, no matter what that person might claim verbally. We can *guess* whether or not a person is a true follower of Jesus based on the way they act and live, but we can never *know* what is truly in their heart, or what the ultimate motivator behind their actions is.

What does this have to do with the interpretation of Bible prophecy? The answer is simple: Bible prophecy is very much concerned with *political* events that will take place throughout the earth’s history, and especially in the last days, and these predictions have often been used to serve the *political* agendas of the various groups, Christian and non-Christian, that have always clashed in their pursuit of power. Because of the fact that these groups and their agendas are always changing and have had different goals at different times and places around the globe it should be obvious why so many different interpretations of Bible prophecy have risen and fallen and continue to exist today.

For instance, the early Church viewed the antagonistic Roman Emperors as Antichrists, and then after the Church came to dominate Rome the Antichrist was perceived in barbarian leaders such as Attila the Hun and Genghis Khan. After the Reformation occurred prophecy scholars again looked to Rome and many Protestants pointed to the Catholic Pope as the Antichrist.

In the twentieth century when global power became consolidated in an Anglo-American alliance, it was Communism that was viewed as the major threat, and certain prophecy scholars found themselves promoted because they were able to interpret Bible prophecy in a way that justified Anglo-American foreign policy during the Cold War.

Today at the beginning of the twenty-first century the

Bush Administration is closely aligned with the Visible Church in America, and there is a predictable promotion of the work of prophecy scholars that give support for the Bush Administration's "War On Terror."

The point to be made is that Bible prophecy, by its very nature as a predictor of political events, has found itself susceptible to widely divergent interpretations and to misuse by groups and organizations which too often have nothing to do with understanding the Truth or spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The bottom line is that this fact of Bible prophecy must be understood, but it should not serve to discourage an honest investigation of what the Bible *really* predicts. The slate must be wiped clean, and the Bible must be approached with an open mind, with sincerity and humility, without political motives, and with Truth as the sole objective. At the same time courage is required to accept the ramifications, both in the life of the individual and in one's perception of the political affairs of the world, that a clear and honest understanding of Bible prophecy can potentially reveal.

It is my hope and prayer that this book will succeed in revealing just a little bit more of the Truth that has been recorded in the book that continues to prove itself as the Word of God.

Peter Goodgame  
Kailua, Hawaii  
December, 2004



# Chapter One:

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## The Foundation of Bible Prophecy

**T**here is a single prophecy that creates the foundation on which much of the framework of Bible prophecy can securely rest. If it is properly understood then it helps to unify all of the visions, signs and symbols into a structure that makes sense and is easily understood. But if it is ignored or misunderstood, then the rest of Bible prophecy remains a largely impenetrable enigma, and a confusing collection of separate visions, signs and symbols that make almost no sense. All by itself this prophecy demonstrates that there is quite a lot more to Christian expectations of the Second Coming of Jesus than simply blind faith.

This prophecy, the single most important prophecy in the entire Bible, was written down by the prophet Daniel over 2500 years ago. Daniel received it from the angel Gabriel, and it was given specifically concerning the Jewish people and the holy city of Jerusalem. This prophecy is commonly referred to as “Daniel’s Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks,” and can be found in the ninth chapter of Daniel, verses 24 through 27,

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to

make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.

So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” (Daniel 9:24-27, NASB)

Gabriel’s message included two predictions that concerned the coming of the promised Messiah: First, it predicted the exact day on which the Messiah would be publicly presented to the people of Israel and to the city of Jerusalem. Second, it made a further prediction of a final seven-year period at the end of the age that would involve Israel, Jerusalem, and the “*abomination of desolation*.” This simple prophecy is given according to the following outline which will help us as we try to understand it:

Verse 24: The Introduction

Verse 25: The Date of the Messiah’s First Coming

Verse 26: Events After the Messiah's First Coming

Verse 27: The Final Seven Years of the Age

### Verse 24: The Introduction

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.”

First of all, it must be understood that the word that is translated here as “weeks” is the word *shebua*. This word means a period or unit of seven, similar to the English word *score*, which refers to a unit of twenty. A *shebua* usually refers to either seven days or seven years. In Biblical times the Jews observed a *shebua* of seven days, resting on the seventh day Sabbath, but they also observed a *shebua* of seven years, when every seventh year they allowed the fields to lie fallow in order for the ground to regain its nutrients. In the context of this prophecy we can be sure that the “weeks” described here are yearly “weeks” and not daily “weeks,” and other Biblical prophecies support this fact. In other words, this prophecy encompasses seventy “weeks” of years, or 490 years.

The first sentence of this prophecy makes it clear that this 490-year period applies to Daniel's people and the holy city; therefore, we know that this prophecy specifically concerns the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. The entire prophecy will then be concluded when six things relating to the Jews and Jerusalem have occurred:

- Transgression will finish.
- Sin will be ended.

- Iniquity will be atoned for.
- Everlasting righteousness will be brought in.
- Vision and prophecy will be concluded.
- The Most Holy place of the Temple will be anointed.

These six things can only be accomplished at the Second Coming of the Messiah, which means that the seventy weeks, or the 490 years of this prophecy, are concluded when Jesus returns. And yes, the Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth, as the next part of the prophecy makes clear.

### **Verse 25: The Date of the Messiah's First Coming**

“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.”

In this verse the angel Gabriel explained to Daniel that the Messiah would come after a total of sixty-nine weeks from *“the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem,”* which would take place *“even in times of distress.”*

King Artaxerxes of Persia gave this decree a few years after Daniel's time and it is recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-8. The text states that it was given in the month of Nisan in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes' reign, a reign that began in July of 465 BC [1]. The Hebrew month of Nisan in which Artaxerxes' decree was given began on March 14, 445 BC [2]. Therefore the angel Gabriel gave Daniel a very simple and very specific prediction that the Messiah would appear to Israel and to Jerusalem after a total of sixty-nine “weeks,” (seven plus sixty-two), or basically 483 “years” (69x7), from the month that began on March 14, 445 BC.

This seems rather straightforward, but unfortunately it is not quite so simple. The problem has to do with the way in which the “weeks” of Daniel’s prophecy, which count down to the coming of the Messiah, should be calculated.

A minimum amount of research shows that the ancient world, from the time of the early Sumerians, observed a calendar of 360 days per year [3]. It was a flawed calendar that differed from the true lunar year of about 354 days and the true solar year of about 365.25 days, but it was accurate enough to be retained, although with periodic adjustments, up until about 500 BC [4]. The book of Daniel was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic, and the evidence suggests that it was written at the end of Daniel’s ministry in Babylon around 535 BC. This evidence alone supports the conclusion that the seventy “weeks” of Daniel’s prophecy should be viewed as seventy seven-year periods of 360 days per “year.”

Further evidence comes from within the book itself. In Daniel 4:23, part of the portion originally written in Aramaic, Daniel gave a divine prophecy that the king of Babylon would suffer a period of insanity that would last for seven “*times*.” In Daniel 7:25, in a reference to the Antichrist at the end of the age Daniel uses the phrase “*a time, times and half a time*.” Then again in Daniel 12:7, in a portion originally written in Hebrew, Daniel writes again of “*a time, times and half a time*” that would be fulfilled at the very end of the age.

Why did Daniel use the strange term “*times*” rather than “*years*” when recording his predictions? The answer is that a “*year*” refers to either a period of 354 days (lunar) or 365.25 days (solar), whereas a “*time*” refers to a period of 360 days. Daniel often referred to “*years*” in his writings, but he used the term “*time*” or “*times*” when he was relating the prophecies he received in dreams or through the messages received from angels.

The conclusion that a “*time*” equals a “year” of 360 days is supported, and indeed *proven*, by the book of Daniel’s New Testament counterpart, which is the book of Revelation. It too gives a prophecy of a period of time at the end of the age and it uses the same terminology of “*a time, times and half a time*” (Revelation 12:14). This exact same period of time is also given as “*1260 days*” in Revelation 12:6. Therefore if three and half “*times*” equals 1260 days, then a single “*time*” equals 360 days.

The bottom line is that Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks should be understood as weeks of “*times*” rather than weeks of astronomically accurate lunar or solar years. This 360-day per “*time*” calculation is proven by the book of Revelation, which in fact refers to the very end of Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in its references to “*1260 days*” and “*a time, time and half a time,*” which we will examine later.

From this formula we can calculate that Daniel’s prophecy predicted that the Messiah would appear sixty-nine weeks, or exactly 173,880 days (69 multiplied by 7 multiplied by 360), from when the command to rebuild Jerusalem was given in the month that began on March 14, 445 BC.

The target date of 173,880 days from March 14, 445 BC calculates to **April 6, 32 AD**, and this calculation has been verified by a number of sources including the British Royal Observatory of Greenwich, England [5].

Daniel’s entire prophecy is focused on the city of Jerusalem, and the first part of this verse mentions the rebuilding of Jerusalem, so it is reasonable to expect that the Messiah would make his predicted appearance to Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah supports this idea and also predicted the manner in which it would take place when he wrote,

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, **your**

**king is coming to you;** He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zechariah 9:9)

In order to understand how these prophecies were fulfilled we must examine the important dates that surround the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. According to Luke 3:1, Jesus of Nazareth was baptized in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, who was crowned Emperor on August 19, 14 AD [6]. The year from August 19, 28 AD to August 19, 29 AD was Tiberius’ fifteenth year. Jesus is believed to have been baptized in the fall season, which would have been the fall of 28 AD. Jesus’ ministry lasted for three and a half years and from this it can be calculated that He was crucified in the spring of 32 AD. The crucifixion took place on the eve of the Jewish Passover holiday, and in 32 AD the Sunday before that Passover fell on **April 6, 32 AD** [7]. This was the day, Palm Sunday, when Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey claiming to be the Messiah. As Jesus was entering the holy city the crowd cried out, “*Blessed is **the king who comes in the name of the Lord!***” They were testifying that they believed Jesus was fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy.

This was the first time that Jesus publicly claimed to be the Messiah. Previously he had privately revealed this fact to his disciples and he had given a number of unmistakable signs and miracles that he was the Messiah, but he refrained from making a public statement of this magnitude until the very day that was predicted in Daniel’s prophecy.

As Jesus approached Jerusalem and the crowd around him went wild, the Pharisees asked Jesus to tell them to keep quiet. Jesus responded by saying that if everyone became quiet then the very stones themselves would cry out to testify that he was the Messiah! Then, prior to entering Jerusalem, Jesus stopped and wept, because he knew what

was going to soon happen to His city. He said,

“If you, even you, had only known **on this day** what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.” (Luke 19:42-44)

In this statement Jesus himself gave evidence that he was fulfilling Daniel’s prophecy when he referred to **a very specific day**, a day that, had Israel’s leaders accepted him, would have brought them peace. Jesus then predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, saying that it would come as a result of Israel’s failure to recognize “*the time of God’s coming*.”

Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks is the only prophecy that predicted the exact time of the coming of the Messiah to Israel and Jerusalem as their leader. Jewish religious scholars who reject Jesus have even admitted this fact in the centuries after the time of Christ. The celebrated thirteenth century Jewish Rabbi Maimonides wrote,

“Daniel has elucidated to us the knowledge of the end times. However, since they are secret, the wise have barred the calculation of the days of Messiah’s coming so that the untutored populace will not be led astray when they see that the End Times have already come but there is no sign of the Messiah.” [8]

In another Jewish commentary on the prophecies that are found within the Hagiographa, a section of Scripture that



includes Daniel, Rabbi Jonathan ben Uzziel wrote,

“And the (voice from heaven) came forth and exclaimed, who is he that has revealed my secrets to mankind?... He further sought to reveal by a Targum the inner meaning of the Hagiographa, but a voice from heaven went forth and said, Enough! What was the reason? Because the date of the Messiah was foretold in it!” [9]

Only the prophecy given to Daniel from the angel Gabriel predicted the *exact time* of the Messiah’s coming, and even history’s most respected Jewish scholars admit to this fact. Daniel’s prediction was fulfilled by Jesus Christ to the very day, and Jesus indicated that he knew he was fulfilling the prophecy by the very words He spoke.

## **Verse 26: Events After the Messiah’s First Coming**

“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”

Verse 25 described two time periods that would precede the coming of the Messiah: a period of seven weeks followed by a period of sixty-two weeks, which adds up to sixty-nine weeks until the public appearance of the Messiah. Verse 26 then gives a list of events that would happen *after* the coming of the Messiah.

First, the Messiah, would be “*cut off*,” meaning killed. Then, the people of a future prince would destroy the city

and the sanctuary. Remember that when Jesus entered Jerusalem He referred to the day of the Messiah's appearance to Jerusalem, and then He referred to the destruction of Jerusalem that would follow that day. Jesus was again confirming the prediction that Gabriel gave to Daniel.

The prophecy continues by predicting that war would continue until the end, and that the end would come like a flood, meaning quickly as in a catastrophe. Jerusalem and the Temple (the "*sanctuary*") would be destroyed and then Israel would be desolate. These terrible events: the death of the Messiah, the destruction of Jerusalem through war, and the end of Israel as a nation, all took place *after* the coming of the Messiah to Jerusalem.

When Daniel received his prophecy from the angel Gabriel around 530 BC there was no Jewish Temple because it had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC. At the beginning of his prophecy Gabriel states that the seventy weeks would begin with the decree to *rebuild* the Temple, and then he ends with the prediction that it would then be *destroyed* after the appearance of the Messiah. In the Babylonian Talmud there is a passage that shows that the rabbis understood that the Messiah would appear during the days of the Second Temple, after which it would be destroyed,

“Granted that they knew it would be destroyed, did they know when this would occur? Rabbi Abaye objected; and did they not know when? Is it not written, seventy weeks are determined upon the people, and upon the holy city? All the same, did they know **on which day?**” [10]

Jesus was crucified several days after he appeared to Jerusalem as Messiah and King. After he was nailed to the cross a sign was placed above him with the words, “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

A generation later in the year 70 AD the city of Jerusalem and the Second Temple were both destroyed at the hands of the Roman army. This helped bring an end to Israel's unified political and religious structure and led to the nation's dispersion and desolation.

These events took place *after* the initial sixty-nine weeks of Daniel's prophecy, but *before* the climactic seventieth and final week of Daniel's prophecy. The first sixty-nine weeks are ancient history, but the seventieth week is the key to understanding the Bible's prophecies for the future.

### **Verse 27: The Final Seven Years of the Age**

“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

The “he” of this verse is the same person who was last described in the previous verse. He is the “*prince who is to come*,” whose people destroyed Jerusalem two millennia ago. The *Romans* destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD and therefore the subject of this verse is a future *Roman* prince or ruler.

This future ruler will initiate the seventieth and final week of Daniel's prophecy by making “*a firm covenant with the many*.” A covenant is a treaty or agreement, and because Israel is the focus of Daniel's entire prophecy most scholars assume that it is made with Israel or at least with “many” of her leaders.

Many prophecy scholars believe that the prophet Isaiah referred to this covenant, doing so in very negative terms,

giving evidence that Israel is indeed one of the parties to this covenant,

“Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem. You boast, ‘We have entered into a covenant with death, with the grave we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.’

So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed. I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place.

Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the grave will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it. As often as it comes it will carry you away; morning after morning, by day and by night, it will sweep through.’ The understanding of this message will bring sheer terror.” (Isaiah 28:14-19)

The confident leaders of Israel will believe that the Roman ruler and the covenant he makes with them will offer protection, but they will be proven wrong. Instead, Israel’s leaders will be betrayed and they will be “*beaten down.*”

Gabriel told Daniel that the covenant would initially be made for one “*week,*” which is seven years, but that in the midst of this seven year period the Roman ruler would “*put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering.*” This message implies that the Jews will once again rebuild their Temple, because

sacrifices and offerings are not a part of the system of Rabbinical Judaism that exists today—it is a practice that could only take place in the context of Temple observances. A Third Temple will be rebuilt, the system of sacrifices and offerings will be resumed, and then a Roman leader will put a stop to them three and a half years after he makes a covenant with Israel's leaders.

Gabriel's message concludes with a strange reference to "*abominations*" and "*desolations*," after which the individual responsible for all of these things will be destroyed. The "*wing*" that Gabriel refers to is viewed by scholars as a reference to a wing of the Temple and the NIV Bible gives a translation of the text that is easier to understand,

"He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing (of the temple) he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

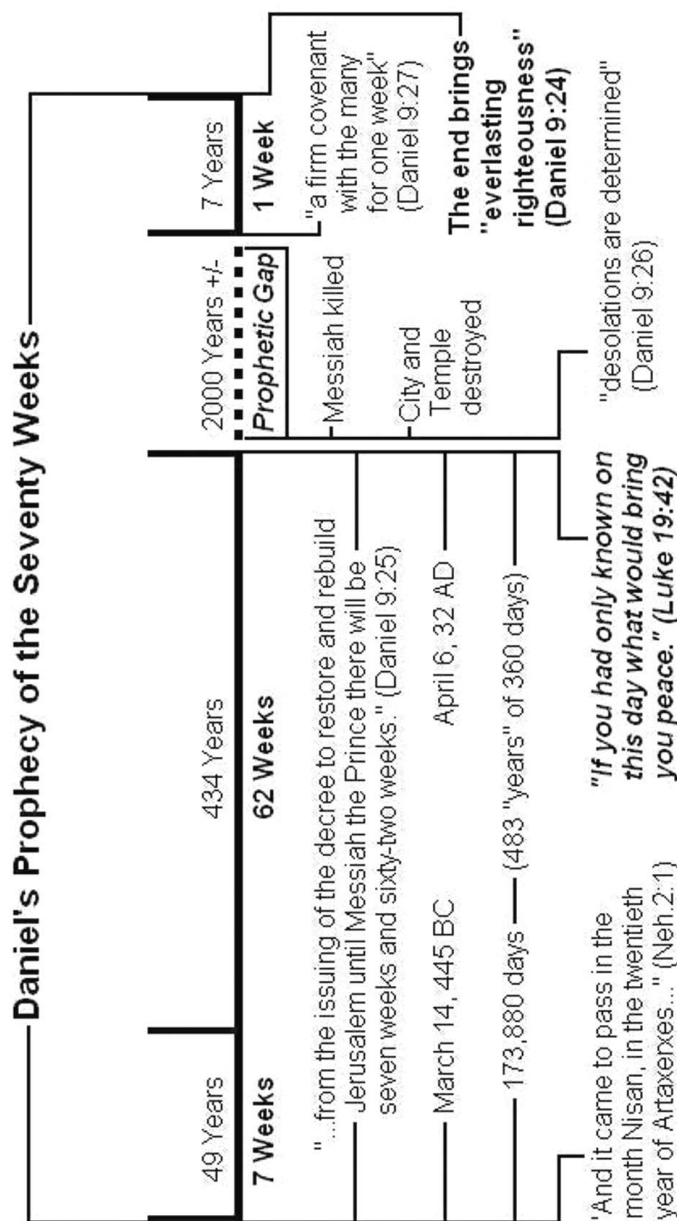
The "*abomination of desolation*" is an object that is directly mentioned by Jesus in his end-times talk that he gave on the Mount of Olives. By mentioning it he makes it clear that the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy will be fulfilled at the time of the end immediately prior to his return,

"Therefore when you see the **abomination of desolation** which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains... For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will... But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:15-30, NASB)

The passage above is part of the sermon given by Jesus on the Mount of Olives that we will return to often throughout this book. Jesus clearly stated that the “*abomination of desolation*” will one day stand in the “*holy place*,” which can only refer to the holy place of the Jewish Temple. This will be an event that initiates the most terrible time of tribulation that the world has ever seen, after which the Messiah will make his return on the clouds of heaven.

The fact that Daniel’s “*abomination of desolation*” is clearly placed in an end-times context by Jesus is a very important point to consider, and it has important ramifications on the way in which the rest of Bible prophecy is to be understood. Before we move on to identify what exactly this *abomination* is, and who the Roman leader is, we must first examine these ramifications to make sure our study is headed in the right direction.



## Notes

1. The Search for Messiah, Mark Eastman, M.D., Chuck Smith, 1996, p.105 (citing the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1990).
2. The Coming Prince, Sir Robert Anderson, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1894.
3. “*Calendars Through the Ages*” at <http://webexhibits.org/calendars/calendar-ancient.html>
4. “*Babylonian Calendar*” at <http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/astronomy/BabylonianCalendar.html>
5. Sir Robert Anderson was the first modern Bible scholar to compute the exact date of the appearance of the Messiah using Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks and his numbers were verified by the British Royal Observatory in 1894. Since that time scholars have offered minor corrections to Anderson’s data, but his overall conclusion remains strong.
6. The Search for Messiah, Mark Eastman, M.D., Chuck Smith, 1996, p.107 (citing the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1990).
7. The Coming Prince, Sir Robert Anderson, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1894.
8. The Search for Messiah, Mark Eastman, M.D., Chuck Smith, 1996, pp.108-9 (citing *Igeret Teiman*, Chapter 3 p. 24).
9. *ibid*, p. 109 (citing the *Targum of the Prophets*, tractate Megillah 3a).
10. *ibid*, pp.111-12 (citing the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate Nazir 32b).



# Chapter Two:

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## Israel and the End Times

Israel's role in end-times prophecy is one of the most highly debated subjects among prophecy scholars. A commonly held view is that after Israel's leaders rejected Jesus as the Messiah, God then turned his back on Israel forever. This view states that in place of Israel God has raised up the Church, and now Christian believers benefit from, and will realize, the promises that God made to Israel. This doctrine is known as *Replacement Theology*, because it holds that the Christian Church has entirely *replaced* Israel as God's chosen people, and that the existence of the Jews today, and of the nation of Israel, is irrelevant in God's plan and in the prophecies that predict the future.

Replacement Theology first emerged within the early Catholic Church and it was often the justification for the recurring periods of official Church-sanctioned Jewish persecution. Replacement Theology is also taught by many of the more monolithic Christian denominations today such as the Seventh-Day Adventists, the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Many of these denominations claim to have already received from God the correct interpretation of prophecy, and indeed of the entire Bible, and each teaches that it alone is the "one true Church" and the "True Israel"

of chosen believers through which God is working to save the world.

The doctrine of Replacement Theology is pertinent to our study of Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks because the interpretation given in chapter one of this book, if correct, completely exposes Replacement Theology as a *false teaching*.

The question revolves around the *seventieth* week of the prophecy. Is this final seven year period in the future? Or is it in the past, having already been completed and fulfilled? This question arises because at the beginning of the prophecy the angel Gabriel says to Daniel, "*Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city...*" This means that all of the 490 years of the prophecy apply to the Jews and to the city of Jerusalem. Therefore, if the final seven years of the prophecy are to be fulfilled in the future, then God also has a future *for Israel and for Jerusalem*—it means that Israel has not been completely replaced or removed from God's plan.

To combat the teaching that Daniel's Seventieth Week is still in the future, Replacement Theologians must explain how it has been fulfilled in the past, and that there was no gap of time between the end of the first sixty-nine weeks and the beginning of the seventieth and final week. Alternate dates are given for both the "*decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem*" which began the seventy weeks of the prophecy, and for the coming of "*Messiah the Prince*," which marked the end of the first sixty-nine weeks of the prophecy. Most explanations of this sort then place the end of the entire 490-year period around the year 34 AD. This conclusion is arrived at despite the clear words of Jesus in Matthew 24 that the *abomination of desolation* (spoken of by the prophet Daniel within the context of the seventieth week) would appear during the great tribulation immediately prior to the Second Coming.

These alternate interpretations of Daniel's prophecy will

not be addressed or challenged in this chapter because many readers, especially those who are new to the subject of Bible prophecy, will probably find the arguments too tedious and too technical to be easily understood. However, because this question is so important I have included a comprehensive appendix at the back of the book in which these different interpretations of Daniel's prophecy are analyzed.

The key is to understand that there is indeed a future seven year period that will apply to the Jews and to Jerusalem, which is evidence that God has not completely turned his back on unbelieving Israel. Further evidence that Israel still has a part to play in God's plan comes from the New Testament itself, and is found in the ninth chapter of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans,

“I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.”  
(Romans 9:2-5)

In this text Paul refers to national Israel in the present tense, as a unique race, and says that to them belong the covenants and the promises. They have not been transferred to the Church, even after the sacrifice of the Messiah, because God still has a plan for Israel despite Israel's rejection of Jesus that caused Paul so much anguish.

Later in the same chapter Paul turns to the subject of the believing remnant within national Israel and he refers to the writings of the prophet Isaiah,

“Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, **only the remnant will be saved.** For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.’ It is just as Isaiah said previously: ‘Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.’ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the ‘stumbling stone.’ As it is written: ‘See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’” (Romans 9:27-33)

At the appearance of the Messiah the religious leaders of Israel were more focused on works than on faith, and they stumbled and rejected Jesus because of this shortcoming. However, the rejection of the Messiah by the greater portion of Israel allowed Jesus to complete his mission, which then allowed for Gentiles to achieve salvation and righteousness before God through faith in his sacrifice. At the same time, however, the believing remnant within Israel remained faithful to God and accepted the Messiah. In Galatians 6:16 Paul refers to this believing remnant within national Israel as the *“Israel of God.”*

The issue of believing Gentiles and the nation of Israel (composed of a believing minority and an unbelieving majority) as related to the Church, is then taken up further by Paul in Romans 11,

“I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don’t you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: ‘Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me’? And what was God’s answer to him? ‘I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: ‘God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.’ And David says: ‘May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.’” (Romans 11:1-10)

The question concerns *national* Israel. Did God completely reject the physical nation of Israel? Paul again answers “no,” and then explains that within the nation of Israel there will always be a remnant of believing Jews, chosen by grace, who are numbered among the elect. The rest of the Jews who exist within the nation of Israel are said by Paul to have been “*hardened*,” and they are that portion of national Israel that does not believe. Paul quotes from two Old Testament passages to explain that this hardening is actually part of the overall plan of God, and then he continues,

“Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!

I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.

You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.’ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted

into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!” (Romans 11:11-24)

Replacement Theology teaches that after the Messiah’s sacrifice God completely rejected national Israel, and that the promises and prophecies regarding Israel were transferred to the Church, the institution made up of both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus as the Messiah. With this doctrine the very term “Israel” is then often read in both the Old and New Testaments as a clever *code word* that actually means “Church.” However, Paul’s message above proves that this simply can’t be the case. Throughout Romans 11 the references to “Israel” and the pronouns “they” and “their” consistently refer to that portion of national Israel that has stumbled and been hardened in unbelief after the coming of the Messiah Jesus.

Paul explains in verse 18 that believing Gentiles (members of the Church) should not “*boast*” over that portion of national Israel that does not believe, because without national Israel they would have never been able to receive salvation in the first place! Paul goes on to make the point that it is more natural for Jews to come to a saving faith in the Messiah than it is for Gentiles. He then writes,

“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’

As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is

concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, **for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.** Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" (Romans 11:25-33)

So far in these passages Paul has been crying out to Gentile believers, telling them not to "*boast*" over unbelieving Israel, not to be "*arrogant*," and not to be "*ignorant*" of the mystery of Israel which might cause them to be "*conceited*." Paul is passionately arguing against any type of thinking that even *resembles* Replacement Theology which, by entirely dismissing the nation of Israel, is boastful, arrogant, conceited and ignorant to the extreme. Despite Paul's warnings it still exists today and is accepted by a greater portion of the Christian Church. However, it would not exist if Paul's words were properly understood and accepted. Let's summarize for a moment:

The Church is made up of both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Israel is made up of a remnant of Jews who believe in Jesus (like Paul himself), plus a greater portion of Jews who have rejected Jesus, stumbled, and been hardened against the truth.

The Church is eternal, and Jews and Gentiles who believe can be confident of eternal life. The believing remnant that exists within Israel is also a part of the Church. In this way Israel and the Church overlap. But what of the rest of Israel, the hardened and unbelieving part? Here is the



answer that Replacement Theologians cannot accept: This portion of Israel has only a *temporary existence*, which Paul explains by saying, “*Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved...*”

According to Paul, at a certain point in the future the hardened and unbelieving portion of Israel will suddenly cease to exist, at which point “*all Israel*” will be saved. Replacement Theologians cannot accept this, and to avoid it they interpret this one reference to “*all Israel*” in verse 26 as another code word for “*the Church*.” Of course the previous reference to “*Israel*” in verse 25 referred to “*national Israel*,” and the following reference to “*Israel*” in verse 28 again refers to “*national Israel*,” but Replacement Theologians must make Paul out to be inconsistent and contradictory by saying that he meant “*the Church*” in this passage when he said “*all Israel*.” I think this interpretation is nonsensical, and I agree with Bible scholar Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, who writes in his book Hebrew Christianity (p.32) that “*the term Israel is never used of Gentiles, whether they are believers or not, nor is it used of the church. It is used only of Jews.*” Israel means Israel, whether national Israel as a whole, believing Israel as a minority or unbelieving Israel as a majority.

Paul brings home his attack on Replacement Theology in verses 28-29 when he refers again to the hardened and unbelieving portion of Israel, the same portion that is an “*enemy of the gospel*,” and says that they are loved by God. The key statement regarding Israel then follows, which is that for them “***God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.***” In other words, the promises and prophecies regarding Israel are irrevocable. They could not have been transferred to the Christian Church as Replacement Theology argues, even though Israel presently exists as an enemy of the Gospel.

## **Political Issues**

No matter how we view Israel's status before God and her role, or lack of it, in the prophecies of the end times, our views are bound to have ramifications in the realm of politics in the world here and now. This fact is unavoidable.

From my perspective there exist two unfortunate extremes when it comes to Israel. On the one hand we have Replacement Theology which, as mentioned earlier, has been used in the past as justification for anti-Semitism. From this perspective the modern-day nation of Israel can only be viewed as an irrelevant but dangerous anomaly, and the Jewish patriots who helped to found Israel as a nation can really be viewed as no better than terrorists and thieves. If the Church has replaced Israel, and Israel has been completely written off by God, then the Abrahamic Covenant in which God gave Canaan to Abraham's descendents is no longer valid, and the Jews should give back the land that they have stolen from the Palestinians. From this perspective Zionism as a political agenda appears as misguided and even evil.

On the other hand there is the opposite extreme of Replacement Theology, which appears as a form of Christian Zionism that offers unconditional support for the goals and actions of the modern-day state of Israel, especially if they point in the direction of fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant. In other words, nothing would make the followers of this extreme view happier than to see a replay of the campaign of ethnic cleansing against the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine that took place when Israel took over the land after the Exodus from Egypt 3500 years ago. Unfortunately, many prominent Christian leaders in the US not only believe that Israel has the right to engage in such a campaign, but a divine imperative to do so!

I believe that this view is misguided and wrong. It is not the Christian's duty to encourage Israel to conquer and take

over the land that God promised to give to the descendents of Abraham. Instead, Christians should support Israel's right to exist, but also pray and work for peace, knowing that the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant will only occur after the national repentance of Israel according to Zechariah 12:10,

“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.”

The passage above predicts a point in the future when the hardened portion of Israel will repent and accept Jesus as the Messiah. At that point the very definition of “Jew” will become “one who accepts Jesus as Lord,” and in this way *“all Israel will be saved.”*

It is the Christian's duty to help bring about this national repentance of Israel by witnessing to Jews one by one, as individuals. And then after Israel repents as a nation and turns to Jesus as her true Messiah God will do His duty and fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant just as He promised He would, as foretold by almost every Old Testament prophet.

## **Conclusion**

It is critical to refute Replacement Theology because as a doctrine it takes away the possibility of a future seven year period focused on Israel and Jerusalem that will bring our present age to a close and usher in the Messianic Age with the return of Jesus.

This final seven year period is the very foundation for understanding Bible prophecy as a complete whole, and taking it away leaves the prophecies of the Bible disconnected and susceptible to all kinds of mischief and misinterpretation. The many radical, conflicting and politicized interpretations of Bible prophecy throughout Christian history testify to this fact!

These first two chapters might have been hard to absorb for some readers, with many details that are hard to remember, but their purpose has been very simple: First, to impress upon the reader that Israel still has a part to play in God's end-times plan, and second, that this plan will be fulfilled on the basis of the Seventieth Week—God's seven year timeline for bringing our present age to a close.

In the next few chapters we will begin to erect our framework for understanding the rest of Bible prophecy upon this solid foundation.

# Chapter Three:

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## The Timeline of the Apocalypse

**T**he book of Revelation is perceived by many to be the most intimidating and incomprehensible book in the Bible and it is a shame how such a reputation has kept so many people from actually reading it. This chapter will begin our task of systematically eroding this undeserved reputation and bringing the simple and common-sense understanding of its contents into the clear light of day.

To begin, we will delve right into the heart of Revelation and discover what it has to say about the history, purpose and future of the nation of Israel, and of her ages-old conflict with Satan.

### Revelation 12

“A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.

Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns

and seven crowns on his heads... His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.

The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for **1,260 days**.

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him... When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for **a time, times and half a time**, out of the serpent's reach...

...Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus." (Revelation 12)

The woman is of course Israel, and her crown of twelve stars refers to the twelve tribes of Israel. The child she gives birth to that is pursued by Satan but taken up to heaven by God is of course Jesus the Messiah.

A great cosmic battle is then described between God's holy angels led by Michael and the fallen angels led by Satan. After Satan and his angels are defeated, thrown from the heavens and confined to the earth, Satan then turns against the woman and begins to pursue her. But what does this woman do, that saves her from the attack from Satan? The answer is repeated in two verses,

— “The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for **1,260 days**.”

— “The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for **a time, times and half a time**, out of the serpent's reach.”

The answer is that she flees into the desert where a place of refuge has been prepared for her. This flight on the part of Israel might bring a spark of recognition to the reader, because Jesus instructed the Jews to make just such an escape in his prophetic sermon that was referred to at the end of chapter one:

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel... then let those who are in Judea **flee to the mountains**. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until

now—and never to be equaled again.” (Matthew 24:15-21)

Jesus instructs the Jews who witness the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place of the Temple to flee immediately into the mountains. We can be certain that Jesus is speaking specifically to Jews when he says “*pray that your flight will not take place on the Sabbath*” because only devout Jews would refuse to travel on the Sabbath Day. Jesus says to flee to the mountains, while Revelation 12 says that the “*woman*” flees to the desert, but the destination is the same: it can only be the mountainous desert area that lies to the east of Jerusalem on the other side of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.

But what about the “*1260 days*” and the “*time, times and half a time*” that is the duration of the woman’s protection? These references become clear if we turn back again to Daniel’s Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks and specifically to the *seventieth* week itself that is still unfulfilled. We can see that this seven year period is neatly divided into two equal halves, and that the appearance of the “*abomination of desolation*” is the event that occurs exactly in the middle:

“He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ **In the middle of the ‘seven’** he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an **abomination that causes desolation**, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” (Daniel 9:27)

As strange and unlikely as it may sound today, the Bible is clear that the Jews will one day build a Third Temple and return to their Temple rituals of making sacrifices and offerings. However, these rituals will be stopped and in their place within the Temple an object will be set up that is called



the “*abomination of desolation.*” This is what Jesus says Jews must recognize as a sign to flee, and Revelation 12 reveals that those who do flee will be given divine protection from the furious attacks that will come from Satan. This protection will last for “*1260 days*” and “*a time, times and half a time,*” which are simply two different ways of referring to the three and a half year period that makes up the *last half* of the seventieth week. 1260 days is exactly three and a half of these 360-day years, which is the same as “*a time*” (one year), “*times*” (two years), and “*half a time*” (half a year).

### Daniel’s Final Vision

The exact phrase “*a time, times and half a time*” also occurs at the very end of the book of Daniel in the context of a long prophecy he received from a holy angel. The message culminates in a prediction of the coming of the person the New Testament refers to as the Antichrist. It states that he will be a king who “*will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place.*” (Daniel 11:36)

The message continues to state that the Antichrist will take over Egypt, Israel, and kingdoms to the east and north. However, verse 41 states that although “*many countries will fall,*” the region of Edom and Moab and the leaders of Ammon “*will be delivered from his hand.*” This specific region is spared from the conquests of the Antichrist, and it happens to include the mountainous desert area to the east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea where many Jews will find safety.

The source of their safety is then explained when the angel says in Daniel 12:1,

“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be **a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.**”

The angel Michael will rise up to supernaturally protect the portion of Israel that flees to the place of refuge as Jesus instructed. The description of unparalleled distress matches up perfectly with the words of Jesus who said that the period of time after the abomination of desolation would be a time of *“great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again”* (Matthew 24:21).

Daniel then asks the angel how long this period of distress will last, and the angel answers that it will last for *“a time, times and half a time”* (Daniel 12:7). This matches up with the texts from Revelation 12 that reveal that this time of suffering will last for *“1260 days”* or *“a time, times and half a time,”* which is, again, the *last half* of the final seven year period of Daniel’s epic prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

The final words of Revelation 12 are important to address because they offer another powerful rebuttal against the doctrine of Replacement Theology. The text records that after Satan pursues the woman and after she escapes to safety in the desert, then Satan turns away and goes off *“to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”*

According to Replacement Theology the woman must be a representation of the Christian Church. But if this is the case, then who are those others who are referred to as the woman’s offspring who *“obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus?”*

This problem reveals Replacement Theology as false, and is solved only when the woman is understood to represent the believing remnant of Israel. Only then can the ref-

erence to her “*offspring*” be naturally understood as a reference to Gentile believers of Jesus Christ.

## **The Two Halves of the Seventieth Week**

The book of Revelation also has several other specific references to either the first or last half of the seventieth week of Daniel. One of them refers to the “Temple of God” and reveals that the Gentiles will once again dominate Jerusalem,

“I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, ‘Go and measure the **temple of God** and the altar, and count the worshipers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for **42 months.**’ ” (Revelation 11:1-2)

Prophecy author Hal Lindsey believes that the reference to the outer court that is excluded from the rebuilt Temple has already been fulfilled [1]. He points to the conclusions of Dr. Asher Kaufman, the eminent archaeologist and professor at Hebrew University, whose research argues that the original Temple was built on a site just north of Islam’s famous shrine, the Dome of the Rock. The Jewish Temple could be rebuilt on this location, but the outer court would have to be left out because that area is presently occupied by the Dome of the Rock. It is an area that has been “*given to the Gentiles.*”

The reference to “*42 months*” again refers to a period that is exactly half of seven years. When the Antichrist takes over Israel and Jerusalem many Jews will flee, leaving Gentiles once again in control of Jerusalem. Their control will last for 42 months, which is the last half of the seventieth week.

The last half of the seventieth week is also a period during which the Antichrist will be given authority by God to do as he pleases throughout the entire world, (except for the small area that will be guarded by Michael the archangel). This may sound strange, but it is one of the rules of the struggle that exists between Satan and God for the souls of mankind. Understand that Jesus also had a three and a half year period to carry out his career (from his baptism to his crucifixion) during which he could have done anything *he* wanted. However, to our benefit he used that time to preach and to teach and to fulfill his role as our Savior by dying on our behalf. The Antichrist will be much less giving, and his career is explained in the following passages, first from Daniel and then from Revelation (again they match perfectly):

“He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be *handed over to him* for **a time, times and half a time.**” (Daniel 7:25)

“The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for **forty-two months**. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. *He was given power* to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And *he was given authority* over every tribe, people, language and nation.” (Revelation 13:5-7)

The Antichrist will have complete power over the world after he takes over Israel and after the abomination of desolation is set up in the Temple in Jerusalem, a power which will last, as the texts above show, for three and a half

*“times” or “42 months.”*

The Antichrist will dominate Jerusalem in the *second half* of the seventieth week, but he will not have such power during the *first half* of the seventieth week, which will be a time when the Jewish religious leaders will be offering sacrifices and offerings in the Temple according to their ancient traditions.

This return to traditional Temple-centered Jewish worship will be a major change for Israel, for Judaism and for the Jewish culture at large. An old Jewish adage is that on any given subject, among two Jews there are at least three opinions. The rebuilding of the Temple will obviously be a hotly debated subject among Jews, and but one momentous event among many during this time.

To help clarify things, at least to those who will listen, God will send two mysterious and powerful figures to speak out to Israel and to the world on His behalf. These are the enigmatic Two Witnesses of Revelation, and their career is briefly related in the following passage from Revelation:

“‘And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for **1,260 days**, clothed in sackcloth.’ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies

will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.” (Revelation 11:3-12)

The 1260-day period during which the Two Witnesses will testify and prophesy is the *first half* of the seventieth week. During this time they will be able to defend themselves from harm with supernatural powers. They will apparently be the Antichrist’s greatest enemies because their message will be heard by the entire earth, even though most of humanity will hate their message and reject it.

The period that they are given to testify, prophesy, and to protect themselves will expire at the exact *midpoint* of the seventieth week, which will coincide with the setting up of the abomination of desolation in the Temple and the Antichrist’s takeover of Israel and Jerusalem. This is the point at which the Antichrist will then be given *his* authority and power over the earth, which includes power “*to make war with the saints, and to overcome them*” (13:7, KJV). He will then use his new power against the defenseless Two Witnesses and he “*shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them*” (11:7, KJV). Their bodies will be left in the streets, but to the horror of their

enemies they will be resurrected and taken to heaven three and a half days after their deaths.

The Two Witnesses play an important part in Bible prophecy and their role and their identities help put the pieces of the puzzle together. We will examine them much closer later, but for now they are important in that they help to clarify the two different halves of the seventieth week.

The Two Witnesses will be given power and minister during the first half, while the Antichrist will be given power and rule during the last half, during which time the holy city will be trampled and a remnant of the Jews will be protected in the desert. Together these two halves make up the final momentous seven year period that will bring mankind's present era of existence to a close. Here again are the specific references:

- “The saints will be handed over to him for **a time, times and half a time.**” (Daniel 7:25)
- “It will be for **a time, times and half a time.**” (Daniel 12:7)
- “They will trample on the holy city for **forty-two months.**” (Revelation 11:2)
- “I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for **1,260 days.**” (Revelation 11:3)
- “The woman fled into the desert... where she might be taken care of for **1,260 days.**” (Revelation 12:6)
- “...the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for **a time, times and half a time...**” (Revelation 12:14)
- “The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for **forty-two months.**” (Revelation 13:5)

## **Futurism or Historicism?**

The interpretation offered above which places the time periods mentioned in Revelation *in the future* at the very end of the age is known as **Futurism**. It is based upon the unfulfilled seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy and upon the belief that Israel will be the focal point of this seven year period immediately prior to the return of Jesus.

For prophecy scholars who do not agree that the seventieth week remains unfulfilled, and who do not believe that Israel is any longer important to God's plan, the time periods within Revelation have to be interpreted another way. The usual approach is the method known as **Historicism** and it is based on the belief that a "day" in Bible prophecy can be interpreted as a "year."

Historicism is predominantly, if not exclusively, a Protestant method of prophetic interpretation, and the usual victim is the Catholic Church. The seven references in Daniel and Revelation to a three and a half year period are all reduced in the Historicist method to 1260 days, and these days are then understood to represent 1260 years. The Roman Empire is viewed as the great "Beast" of Revelation, and the Pope is viewed as the Antichrist. One of the many Historicist interpretations is that the Papacy's power over the earth lasted for 1260 years, from the years 538 AD to 1798 AD. It began with the "Donation of Constantine" when the Roman Emperor declared that the Roman Pope was the head of the Christian Church and it ended when Napoleon's general captured the Pope and imprisoned him in France [2]. Another theory argues that the Papacy's power was instead most effective from 610 AD to 1870 AD [3].

Here is the definition of Historicism given at the website [Historicism.com](http://Historicism.com):



“Historicism is the method of interpreting Biblical prophecy by comparing *history* to the prophecy in question. Historicists believe that prophecy is history pre-written. Therefore prophecy can be understood by looking to the **past** to discover what has, and hasn’t, been fulfilled. Historicism, as a school of thought, like futurism, contains many differing opinions as to details of prophetic interpretation. It is not a *system* that must stand or fall by its ability to withstand criticism. It is a *method of interpretation* that allows its adherents to continually re-evaluate their opinions as they grow in their understanding of both history, and the Bible.” [4]

Historicism is a very provocative method of understanding Bible prophecy, but one of its drawbacks is that it depends upon a proper understanding of history that can never be achieved. Our understanding of history is not concrete; it is very fluid and very subjective. History suffers by the fact that it is always written by the victors and by the rich and powerful. By itself history can be used as a propaganda tool, and when combined with Bible prophecy it becomes even more of a dangerous tool.

Another drawback of Historicism is its subjective spiritual and symbolic method of interpretation. Bible prophecy is full of symbols, but these symbols are almost always immediately explained in the text. The historicist will often go beyond the Biblical explanation of the many symbols, or even offer symbolic or spiritual interpretations for passages that are meant to be taken literally.

For instance, the Historicist asks “what does Israel *represent*?” or “what does the Temple *represent*?” or “what do the Two Witnesses *represent*?” For the Futurist the text is understood as literal and the answer is simple: Israel is Israel, the Temple is the Temple, and the Two Witnesses are

two men who witness.

Futurists such as myself use the same so-called “literal method of interpretation” when it comes to the seven texts in Daniel and Revelation that refer to time periods of three and a half years. The references to “42 months” are understood as 42 months, “1260 days” are understood as 1260 days and “a time, times and half a time” is understood as basically three and a half years, not 1260 years! The Scriptures use *three different ways* of referring to these crucial three and a half year periods, in days, months and years, precisely to stress the fact that they refer to specific and literal *three and a half year* periods. There are no “codes” that have to be broken and the real meaning is plainly stated in the text.

During the Reformation Historicism was the dominant method of prophetic interpretation and it became even more widespread with the rise of the Protestant British Empire, and within Protestant circles in the United States. However, by the time the Papacy was neutralized as a political competitor to Anglo-American power by the end of the nineteenth century, Historicism was already beginning to fade in popularity within the Protestant world.

The many different interpretations, explanations and speculations found within the vast body of Historicist scholarship over the past four or five centuries have contributed a great deal to the secular perception that the interpretation of Bible prophecy is a completely subjective and unreliable exercise. Historicism deserves to be viewed the same way as Replacement Theology and if both of these teachings are pushed aside then much confusion is avoided and the meanings of the prophecies of the Bible come into a much clearer focus.

## **The Abomination of Desolation**

Before we move on to the other themes and events in Revelation we should first clear up what the *abomination of desolation* exactly is. According to the prophet Daniel, it marks the centerpoint of the seventieth week,

“He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” (Daniel 9:27)

According to Jesus, the abomination of desolation marks the beginning of the most terrible time of tribulation the world has ever seen,

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel... then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains... For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.” (Matthew 24:15-21)

The Apostle Paul adds to our understanding of this issue when he predicts the coming of the Antichrist saying,

“He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:4)

Daniel predicts that a certain figure will stop the sacrifices

and offerings that will be given in a future Temple, and replace them with something viewed as an “*abomination*.” Jesus says that this “*abomination*” will stand in the “*holy place*” of the Temple, while Paul says that the Antichrist will set *himself* up in God’s Temple. All of these statements can be understood when compared with some key texts in Revelation that deal with the Antichrist and his junior partner, the False Prophet,

“The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation...

Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast...

And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast... He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.” (Revelation 13:5-15)

The first beast is the Antichrist and the second beast is referred to in Revelation 19:20 as the “*false prophet*.”

Together the two beasts and the dragon, which is Satan, make up the Unholy Trinity that will rule over and deceive the vast majority of humanity prior to the Second Coming of Jesus.

The “*abomination of desolation*” will simply be an image of the Antichrist that the False Prophet will set up in the Jewish Temple. That is what Paul meant when he said that the Antichrist would “*set himself up in God’s Temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*”

The setting up of this image at the midpoint of the seventieth week of Daniel is, according to the parallel predictions of Daniel, Jesus, Paul and the book of Revelation, the culmination of the Antichrist’s plan to dominate and deceive humanity.

## The False Prophet

Most prophecy scholars that take a Futurist perspective believe that the Antichrist will be a world leader who will originally come from Rome, or at least from a region that was once part of the ancient Roman Empire. This belief is based on the text of Daniel 9:26-27, given below in the NASB translation,

“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and **the people of the prince who is to come** will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

And **he will make a firm covenant** with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction,

one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

The Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 AD, and therefore the “*prince who is to come*” must be a Roman prince. He is the subject of verse 27 who initiates the covenant that corresponds with the seventieth and final week of Daniel’s seventy-week prophecy, and he is the figure involved in stopping the Temple rituals and setting up the abomination of desolation. But is he the Antichrist, or is there another possibility that should be considered?

I believe that the Roman “*prince*” mentioned in Daniel 9:26-27 is more than likely the False Prophet of Revelation, rather than the Antichrist, and I base this belief on two pieces of evidence.

The first is the fact that according to Revelation the False Prophet is the figure who personally oversees the setup of the image of the Antichrist in the Temple. It is true that he will be following the orders given to him by the Antichrist, but according to Revelation he is the person most immediately responsible for setting it up.

The second is based upon the terminology in the book of Daniel that is used to refer to the Antichrist. He is a figure mentioned once in the vision of the four beasts in Daniel 7:24, once in the vision of the ram and the goat in Daniel 8:23, and at least once in the vision of the end of the age in Daniel 11:36. The important point to note is that in all of these texts and visions the Antichrist is consistently referred to as a “king” using the Hebrew word *melek*. On the other hand, in Daniel 9:26-27 the figure who initiates the covenant and sets up the abomination is referred to as a “prince” using the Hebrew word *nagid*. A prince is subservient to a king and the False Prophet will be subservient to the Antichrist.

According to Revelation 13 the False Prophet will be an immensely influential figure who will be an important pro-

moter of the Antichrist and of his policies. He will have to be a powerful *spiritual* and *religious* leader because he is able to convince humanity to *worship* the Antichrist and his image. Daniel 9:26-27 informs us that this religious leader will be based in Rome, and I believe it not unreasonable to speculate that perhaps he will be a future apostate Roman Catholic Pope.

In this case we should not look to the Antichrist as the figure who will initiate the covenant with Israel that will bring about the final seven years of the age, but instead we should look to a future Catholic Pope and watch carefully the Vatican's dealings with the state of Israel.

It is no secret that the Vatican desires complete control over Jerusalem's Old City and the Temple Mount and a good overview and chronology of this ongoing scheme is given in an article entitled *The Vatican's Agenda*, available on the internet, written by Jewish journalist Joel Bainerman [5].

Barry Chamish is another source who has continually exposed the intriguing Vatican-Israeli relationship. His books and weekly editorials highlight the Globalist manipulation of the state of Israel and the plight of the Jews and Palestinians caught in the conflict [6].

Israel and Jerusalem are predicted in the Bible to be at the very heart of the spiritual and political events that will occur at the end of the age, and contemporary events are proving that these predictions are true.

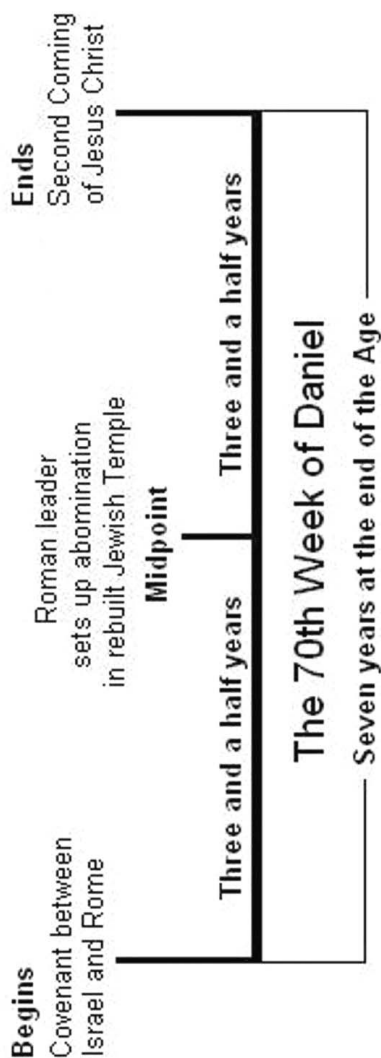
## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter has been to emphasize the importance of the end-times fulfillment of the seventieth week of Daniel, to highlight how it is split into two equal periods of three and a half years each by the setting up of an image of the Antichrist in the Temple (the abomination of

desolation), and to show how the predictions made by Daniel, Jesus, Paul and in the book of Revelation all converge on this climactic event.

The next chapter will show how the dominant theme of Revelation, which is the judgment sequence of seven Seals, seven Trumpets and seven Bowls, can be understood in its chronological relation to the two halves of the seventieth week.





## **Notes**

1. Planet Earth – 2000 A.D., Hal Lindsey, 1996, p.167.
2. National Sunday Law, A. Jan Marcussen, 1986, pp.24-25.
3. <http://www.historicism.com/Guinness/Light/light11.htm>
4. <http://www.historicism.com/tour/tour2.htm>
5. <http://www.joelbainerman.com/articles/vatican.asp>
6. Traitors and Carpetbaggers in the Promised Land, Barry Chamish, 1997, also [www.barrychamish.com](http://www.barrychamish.com) and “*The Vatican’s Plot Against Israel*” at <http://www.redmoonrising.com/bc5.htm>

## Chapter Four:

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### The Benchmark of Revelation

**T**he seventieth week of Daniel is the general timeline of the Apocalypse and this final seven year period is divided in half by the “crowning achievement” of the Antichrist, which is the moment his image is set up in the Temple in Jerusalem and mankind is forced to worship him as God.

Alongside this general seven-year timeline there is another timeline of specific events that are described in Revelation. This secondary timeline is the dominant theme of Revelation—the sequence of three series of judgments: the seven Seals, seven Trumpets and seven Bowls. The Seals are described in Revelation chapters 6, 7 and 8, the Trumpets in chapters 8, 9 and 11, and the Bowls in chapters 15 and 16.

The task before us is to find a way to connect the general timeline of the seventieth week with the sequence of specific events that are described by the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls. Where among the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls does the seventieth week begin? Where does the important mid-point of the seventieth week fall? Where does the seventieth week end?

The last question is the easiest to answer. It is obvious that the seventieth week *ends* only a short time after the last

of the seven Bowl judgments is given. The sixth Bowl paves the way for the armies of the world to converge on the valley of Armageddon in Israel, and the seventh Bowl brings forth the greatest shaking the earth has ever felt, followed by a terribly destructive shower of meteors upon the earth's surface. When Jesus finally does appear he will destroy the kings of the earth and their armies at Armageddon and he will throw the Antichrist and the False Prophet into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:19-21).

It is important to understand that Jesus will appear at the very end of the seventieth week and at that time the reign of the Antichrist will be ended. The Antichrist is given power to rule for exactly "*a time, times and half a time*," and "*42 months*"—not one month less or more, and the end of his reign will come when he is destroyed by Jesus.

The question of when the seventieth week *begins* in relation to the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls is a question that will be answered in the next chapter. The usual answer given by most prophecy scholars is that the seventieth week begins when the first Seal is opened but I believe that this answer is wrong. For now we will answer the middle question which is, where does the midpoint of the seventieth week fall within the Seal, Trumpet and Bowl judgments?

The answer, which is missed or ignored by more than a few well-known prophecy scholars, is given in an insignificant passage at the very end of the narrative that describes the death and resurrection of the Two Witnesses. Remember that these two saints are killed at the midpoint of the seventieth week on the same day in which the image of the Antichrist is set up in the Temple, after which their dead bodies are left out on the street for three and a half days. Here is the passage,

“But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their

feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. **The second woe has passed;** the third woe is coming soon.” (Revelation 11:11-14)

The second “woe” is ended when the earthquake strikes Jerusalem at the very hour in which the Two Witnesses are resurrected and taken up to heaven. The second “woe” is simply the sixth Trumpet judgment. This means that the seven Seals and the first six Trumpet judgments all take place prior to the resurrection of the Two Witnesses, which itself takes place three and a half days after the midpoint of the seventieth week. For this important point to sink in perhaps the outline of the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls should be explained more clearly.

The seven Seals are the initial judgments of the book of Revelation. The first four Seals are introduced using the imagery of the infamous “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.” The fifth Seal contains a prediction that many believers will be slain during the end-times tribulation period. The sixth Seal brings forth a collection of astronomical signs, as well as a great shaking of the entire earth. The seventh Seal brings forth another earthquake and also brings forth the angels who blow the seven Trumpets. The seven Bowls then follow the Trumpets and they are the last judgments or plagues upon the earth.

The seven Trumpet judgments are themselves divided between the first four and the final three. The four angels who blow the first four Trumpets are called the angels who

are “given power to harm the land and the sea” in Revelation 7:2, while the judgments that are marked by the blowing of the final three Trumpets are referred to as the “three woes” by an eagle in Revelation 8:13,

“As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: ‘Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!’ ”

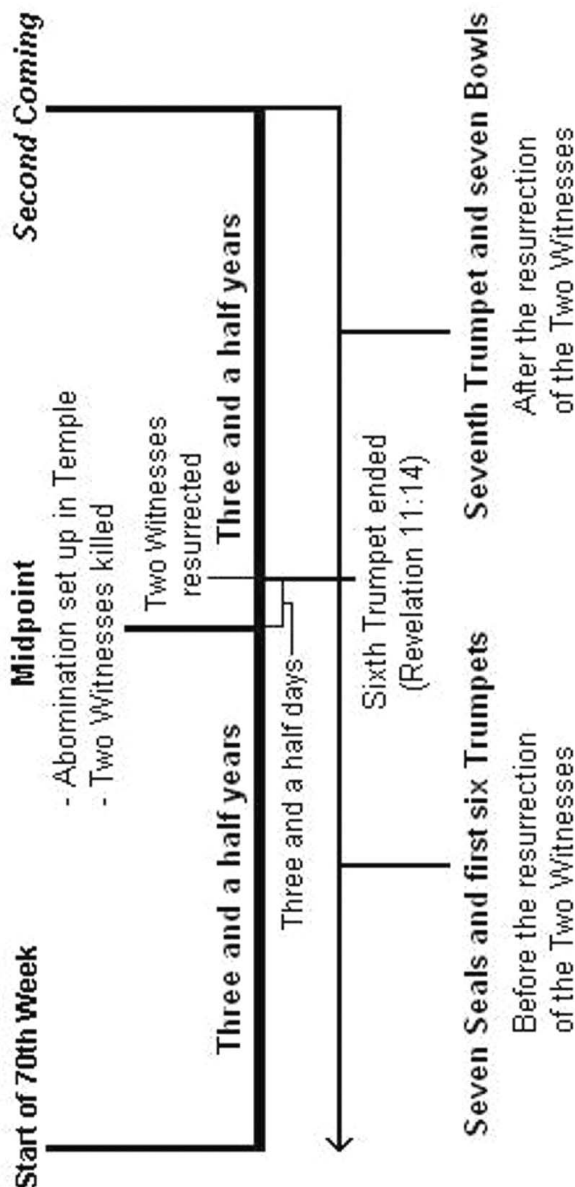
After the fifth Trumpet is sounded and the judgment has been completed Revelation 9:12 states, “*The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come,*” and after the Two Witnesses are resurrected we are informed that the effects of the sixth Trumpet judgment is ended when it states in Revelation 11:14 that “*The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.*”

This simple passage creates a firm “Benchmark,” so to speak, that connects the general timeline of the seventieth week with the sequence of specific events related by the Seal, Trumpet and Bowl judgments of Revelation.

**It means that the midpoint of the seventieth week should be placed exactly three and a half days before the very end of the sixth Trumpet judgment of Revelation.**

It also means that all of the seven Seals and the first six Trumpet judgments occur *prior to* the midpoint of the seventieth week, except for a small portion of the sixth Trumpet judgment which extends past the midpoint by only three and a half days. The seventh Trumpet that is blown some time later is the third Woe, and it brings forth the final seven Bowl judgments, all of which take place exclusively within the *last half* of the seventieth week. The chart on the next page helps illustrate this connection between the seventieth week and the judgments of Revelation.

## The Judgments of Revelation and the 70th Week



This understanding helps us a great deal when it comes to charting the exact timing and sequence of prophetic events, but how firm is our conclusion and how solid is this Benchmark?

It depends on two things: first, that the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls will indeed be fulfilled in the same chronological sequence as given in Revelation, and second, that the Two Witnesses, as we concluded in the last chapter, do indeed carry out their ministry in the *first half* of the seventieth week. Neither of these conclusions are universally accepted within the field of Bible scholarship, and so we should spend some time double-checking them and examining the arguments that are put up against them.

### **Sequential, Random or Simultaneous?**

The commonly accepted interpretation among Futurist scholars regarding the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls of Revelation is that they will be fulfilled one by one in the precise sequence that they are given in the book of Revelation. Despite this simple and common-sense reading of Revelation, there are scholars who put forth other ideas about how to understand the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls.

One school of thought believes that they have been, or will be fulfilled randomly and that the sequence given in Revelation is of no help to us. Another school of thought believes that at least some of the judgments found in the sequence are redundant and are simply re-statements of the same event, or that some of the judgments are fulfilled simultaneously.

For instance, there are a number of blackouts in the sequence of judgments: one at the opening of the sixth Seal, one at the fourth Trumpet, and another at the fifth Bowl. Some commentators believe that these three blackouts are



simply three different references to the same event.

Scholars have also speculated on the similarities between the sixth Seal, the seventh Trumpet and the seventh Bowl judgments—they all appear to have elements that suggest the Second Coming of Christ. Because of these similarities some scholars believe that some of the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls are fulfilled simultaneously, and that they all culminate at the very end with these judgments.

Despite the fact that there are many judgments that appear to be similar within the sequence of Seals, Trumpets and Bowls, I do not believe that *similarity* automatically equals *sameness*. There are blackouts within each sequence but they each contain differences. The sixth Seal is a blackout of the sun, but the moon is turned red like blood. The fourth Trumpet is a blackout, but only a partial blackout (perhaps derived from the meteor impact of the second Trumpet), which decreases the light from the sun, moon and stars by a third. The fifth Bowl judgment, on the other hand, brings a blackout that is total and complete. This is the blackout that Jesus refers to that will occur at the very end of the tribulation period, immediately prior to his return. The words he used to describe it were quoted from the prophet Isaiah,

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel... then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains... For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again...

Immediately after the distress of those days **‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’** At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They

will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:15-30)

“Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man’s heart will melt. Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame. See, the day of the LORD is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.

**The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.** I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. Therefore **I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place** at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.” (Isaiah 13:6-13)

There are a few similarities within the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls that may appear to hint at a simultaneous fulfillment of these judgments, but if they are examined closer the differences become apparent and the notion of simultaneous fulfillment crumbles as a viable option.

The only option that remains is the option that presents itself with a simple common-sense reading of Revelation, which is the understanding that the judgments are fulfilled in sequence, one after the other. The first six Seals must pre-

cede the seventh, because the seventh brings forth the seven angels who blow the Trumpets. After the sixth Seal is opened the angels who blow the first four Trumpets are told to wait until the 144,000 servants of God are sealed. Then after they are sealed the seventh Seal is opened and the first four Trumpets are sounded.

The last three Trumpets are the three “Woe” judgments that the eagle refers to. These have to be fulfilled in sequence as well, because of the statements that “*the first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come,*” and then later, “*the second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.*”

The third Woe is the seventh Trumpet, and blowing it also brings to a completion the judgments associated with the seven-sealed scroll. This scroll is a type of Title Deed to the earth, and when the seventh Trumpet of the seventh Seal is finally blown voices in heaven cry out, “*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.*”

This does not mean that Jesus has returned and the seventieth week has ended; it merely means that the time has come for Jesus to fulfill his role as the true and rightful King of the world. After this claim is made then voices in heaven proclaim that the time has come for three things to happen (Revelation 11:15-18):

1. Judging the dead
2. Rewarding the saints and prophets
3. Destroying those who destroy the earth

These three tasks are then taken up in the reverse order that they are given. First, those who destroy the earth (referring to the Antichrist and the portion of humanity that follows him) are addressed via the seven Bowl judgments, which are referred to as the “*seven last plagues*” in Revelation 15:1. If they are indeed the *last* plagues then the sequential fulfillment

is again confirmed because all other judgments must have preceded them and none can follow them.

The first Bowl is specifically targeted against *“those who destroy the earth”* because it causes *“loathsome and malignant”* sores only on the people who worship the Beast (the Antichrist) who have taken the Mark of the Beast upon their hand or forehead in allegiance to him. The remaining Bowls are also targeted at the Beast’s kingdom and at his followers, and by the end of the sixth Bowl unrepentant humanity is enraged to the point that they are willing to take up arms and fight against the Creator of the universe. The armies of the nations will be gathered to the Valley of Armageddon in Israel where Jesus will return to finally and completely *“destroy those who destroy the earth.”* This pathetic last stand of a God-hating world is also predicted in Psalm 2:

“Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. ‘Let us break their chains,’ they say, ‘and throw off their fetters.’

The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, ‘I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.’

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.’

Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be

angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”

## The Two Witnesses

In the previous chapter it was explained how the ministry of the Two Witnesses, which is stated to last for “1260 days,” will take place entirely during the *first half* of the seventieth week. This is based on the fact that both the Beast (Antichrist) and the Two Witnesses are given power to carry out opposite agendas: The Two Witnesses are “*given power*” to preach their message and destroy their enemies (11:3-5), and the Beast is “*given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them*” (13:7). Furthermore, the Beast exercises his power against the Two Witnesses when he attacks, overpowers and kills them at a point “*after they have finished their testimony*” (11:7), which can only mean after their 1260-day ministry has expired.

All of these points suggest that the opposing and conflicting powers given to the Beast and the Two Witnesses could not be exercised simultaneously, but must be exercised sequentially, with the 42-month reign of the Beast following after the 1260-day ministry of the Two Witnesses, with the transition between them occurring precisely at the midpoint of the seventieth week.

Although this appears to be logical there are prophetic models that arrive at the conclusion that the Two Witnesses are given their power to preach during the same time period that the Beast is given his power to conquer and kill the saints. Models such as these have an objective of placing the midpoint of the seventieth week at a point within the *Seal* judgments, rather than during the sixth Trumpet. Supporters of such an unnatural chronology are thereby forced to defend

a *last half*, or *post-abomination*, ministry of the Two Witnesses. Such a conclusion is illogical and ultimately indefensible, and leads to the creation of even more far-out and creative theories that we will not begin to address just yet.

A first half ministry of the Two Witnesses is the only option that makes sense and this conclusion is also supported by the sequence in which the events of Revelation are recorded. Consider the fact that the seven Seals and the first six Trumpets are all described in chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 of Revelation. The events that take place at the midpoint of the seventieth week, such as the flight of Israel to the desert and the empowerment of the Antichrist and the setting up of his image, are related in chapters 12 and 13. This is followed by the final seven bowl judgments that are described in chapters 15 and 16 of Revelation.

When all things are considered it becomes clear that the book of Revelation itself, by its very textual structure, supports the conclusion that the *midpoint* of the seventieth week occurs after the sixth Trumpet is blown and while its effects are being felt. It only makes sense to conclude that the death of the Two Witnesses occurs at the midpoint of the seventieth week as well, and the description of this event in chapter 11 of Revelation next to the other midpoint events is well placed.

When all of the options are considered our Benchmark remains secure and we can trust it as we continue to build our chronology of prophetic events.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter has been to create a solid link between the timeline of the seventieth week of Daniel and the sequence of the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls of Revelation. It has been shown that the midpoint of the sev-

entieth week falls *within* the sixth Trumpet judgment, which ends three and a half days after the midpoint.

Evidence has also been provided that the book of Revelation should be understood in the basic chronological sequence that it was written in, and that the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls are judgments that are felt one after the other.

It has also been shown that the Two Witnesses carry out their divinely empowered task in the *first half* of the seventieth week, and after their time expires they will be killed by the Beast, who will then rule unchallenged over the entire world throughout the *last half* of the seventieth week.

Before our next step of marking the beginning of the seventieth week within the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls we must first address the nature of the great and terrible Day of the Lord that is warned about by both Old and New Testament prophets.





## Chapter Five:

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### The Day of the Lord

“**T**he Day of the Lord” is a term used throughout the Old and New Testaments of the period of God’s judgment upon the earth at the very end of the age. When all of these prophecies are studied together it is possible to create a vivid picture of what the Day of the Lord will include, how it will begin, and when it will begin in relation to the seventieth week of Daniel and the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls of Revelation.

Everyone on the face of the earth will know when the Day of the Lord has begun. It will involve a cataclysmic planetary catastrophe, it will include an amazing cosmic display and it will also bring about a powerful spiritual awareness within every individual on the face of the earth. Every person will be touched with the knowledge that God has intervened and nothing will ever be the same again.

However, in the wake of the extraordinary events that mark the beginning of the Day of the Lord the world will witness the rise of the Antichrist who will offer satisfying explanations and soothing words to deceive mankind away from the truth of what is happening and away from the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Day of the Lord is a controversial subject within the

study of prophecy and there are disagreements regarding when it begins in relation to the seventieth week and the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls, as well as how it begins and how long it lasts. This chapter will begin to provide these answers which will support the chronology that has been developed so far and help push our study forward.

To begin with, there are four major signs or events that are each predicted numerous times in both the Old and New Testaments to take place *during* the Day of the Lord. The usual pattern of these “Day of the Lord” prophecies is a statement such as “*the Day of the Lord is near...*” or “*the Day of the Lord is coming...*” followed by the description of what will happen within, during, or as a result of, the Day of the Lord.

One of these four major events is a blackout of the sun, moon and stars. As the last chapter explained, there are three such blackouts within the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls of Revelation and the last two of these occur *during* the Day of the Lord. The final fifth Bowl blackout is a total blackout and it is the same as the one predicted by Jesus in Matthew 24:29 and in Isaiah 13:9-10. The prophet Joel also refers to blackouts three times, again with two of them predicted to occur *during* the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:10 and 3:15).

Another major event to occur *during* the Day of the Lord is a great shaking of the heavens and of the entire earth. Jesus refers to a shaking of the heavens in connection with the great blackout at the end of the Day of the Lord in Matthew 24:29. Isaiah 2:19-21 and 24:19-20 both predict a shaking of the earth, while Isaiah 13:13 predicts a shaking of the heavens and the earth. Joel 3:16 also predicts a great shaking of the heavens and the earth.

In Revelation there are two major shakings of the heavens and the earth. The first occurs in connection with the sixth Seal (Revelation 6:14) and the last occurs at the very end when the seventh Bowl is poured out (16:18-20). These two distinct cosmic/global catastrophes are very important

to keep in mind as we continue to piece together our chronology of prophetic events. Another shaking of the earth that must be mentioned is the one described in Ezekiel 38:19-20, which we will inspect in the next chapter.

A third major event, which is perhaps better termed a *purpose* or *result* of the Day of the Lord, is the destruction of the wicked. It is described in numerous Old Testament passages including Isaiah 13:9 and 34:2, Obadiah 1:15-16, and Zephaniah 1:17. The wicked will be destroyed *during* the Day of the Lord, which is also predicted numerous times near the end of the book of Revelation.

The fourth major event involving the Day of the Lord is the complete destruction of the earth that will allow for its complete renovation. This is predicted in several Old Testament texts including Zephaniah 1:2-18, Zechariah 14:8-9 and in Isaiah chapters 24-27. In the New Testament the destruction and renovation of the earth is predicted in 2 Peter 3:10-13, and in Revelation 21.

In addition to the many prophecies that describe events that will take place *during* the Day of the Lord, there are three prophecies that describe signs or events that will take place *before* the Day of the Lord.

“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for **that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the man doomed to destruction.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3)

“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.” (Malachi 4:5-6)

**“The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”** (Joel 2:31)

The events that must precede the Day of the Lord are the revealing of the Antichrist, the appearance of Elijah to Jewish families, and the cosmic sign of the sun turning dark and the moon turning the color of blood.

The revealing of the Antichrist should not be mistaken with the setting up of his image in the Temple. The takeover of Jerusalem and the Temple is his highest achievement, but he must first make his rise to power before he can achieve that goal, and he must first be revealed before he can begin his rise to power.

The appearance of Elijah concerns the fathers and children of the nation of Israel. Elijah will make a supernatural appearance prior to the Day of the Lord and it will be made for the purpose of strengthening Jewish families in order for them to deal with the many challenges that the Day of the Lord will bring. Perhaps Elijah will appear during the traditional Sedar meal that every Jewish family celebrates once each year in the spring, when a place is always made at the table for Elijah.

The third event that is predicted to occur before the “*great and dreadful day of the Lord*” is the darkening of the sun and the moon turning the color of blood. This is the sign that allows us to pinpoint the beginning of the Day of the Lord within the book of Revelation, because this sign is very clearly shown at the opening of the sixth Seal:

“I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. **The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,** and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’”  
(Revelation 6:12-17)

There are a number of elements in addition to the blood red moon that prove that this is the point at which the Day of the Lord begins. But first, here is a breakdown of the events that take place at the opening of the sixth seal:

- 1- A local earthquake at an ungiven location
- 2- A darkening of the sun
- 3- A blood red moon
- 4- A brilliant meteor shower of falling stars
- 5- A great shaking of the earth

The first four events all precede the “*great and dreadful day of the Lord*,” which begins with the fifth event when the earth is shaken in a way never before felt by modern man. When it occurs the earth will be in darkness and the stars (at least those not falling) will be visible in the sky. As the earth rolls on its axis the sky will appear to recede, just like the letters are rolled up as a scroll is being read. At the same

time mountains and islands will move from their set places (perhaps in modern terms meaning their latitude and longitude coordinates) which, when combined with the movement of the sky, is suggestive of a massive “polar shift” type of event. Perhaps during or after this event the North Star will be seen in the west, or the Southern Cross in the north.

Whatever the precise nature of this earth-shaking event, the reaction to it by the people on the earth is the same: absolute fear and sheer terror! The verbal response that humanity makes to this event proves that it is indeed the beginning of the Day of the Lord:

“Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For **the great day of their wrath** has come, and who can stand?”

The prophet Isaiah gives his own prediction of this catastrophic event, and his description confirms that it is indeed a great shaking of the earth and indeed a “Day of the Lord” event:

“Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty! The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted **in that day**. The **LORD Almighty has a day** in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled)...

Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, **when he rises to shake the earth...** They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, **when he**

**rises to shake the earth.** Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?” (Isaiah 2:10-22)

In both of the accounts, in Revelation and in Isaiah, the Day of the Lord is mentioned, the earth is shaken, humanity responds in terror by fleeing to the caves and mountains, and humanity acknowledges that God has acted. In Isaiah they flee from the “*splendor of God’s majesty*” and in Revelation they flee so that they can be hidden from the face of God and from the wrath of Jesus. This is not to say that God or Jesus become visible, but only that mankind is overcome by fear of that possibility because they know that God alone is responsible for what has just happened.

## Conclusion

The beginning of the Day of the Lord is clearly fixed within the sixth Seal of Revelation, as the fifth of five events, which is a massive shaking of the entire earth by God Himself. This is proven by the fact that this shaking of the earth comes after the sign of the darkened sun and blood red moon, which is the sign predicted by Joel to *precede* the Day of the Lord, and proven as well as by the response from the people on the earth *afterwards* who say, “*The great day of God’s wrath has come and who can stand?!’*”

When this catastrophic earth-shaking event is placed on our timeline of the seventieth week, we find that it comes far prior to the midpoint of the seventieth week, which occurs near the end of the sixth Trumpet judgment of Revelation as explained in the previous chapter.

The next chapter will compare the events in Revelation and Isaiah that describe the beginning of the Day of the Lord with a well known prophecy from Ezekiel, and from there

we will finally nail down the beginning of the seventieth week to its proper place in relation to the Day of the Lord and within the sequence of the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls of Revelation.



# Chapter Six:

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## The Magog Invasion of Israel

**T**he Apostle Paul gives a description of the coming of the Day of the Lord that is very important to our study of Bible prophecy:

“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4)

The first thing that Paul tells us is that the Day of the Lord will come like a “*thief in the night*.” The Apostle Peter says the exact same thing in 2 Peter 3:10, and this metaphor simply tells us that the Day of the Lord will come as a complete surprise to those who are not prepared.

The second thing that Paul tells us is that prior to the Day of the Lord people will be saying “*peace and safety*,” and that these same people “*will not escape*” when the Day of the Lord begins.

The third thing is that the Day of the Lord will come with “*sudden destruction.*” The sudden and destructive nature of the Day of the Lord is also mentioned by many Old Testament prophets including Isaiah (13:6): “*Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty,*” and Joel (1:15): “*Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.*”

When these prophecies that describe *how* the Day of the Lord is to begin are combined with what we learned in the previous chapter about the sixth Seal, then we find that they match up extraordinarily well with one of the most important prophecies given by the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel. It is a prediction of an end-times invasion of Israel by a coalition of armies that provokes God to once again physically intervene on a global scale to protect His people.

## **The Regathering of Unbelieving Israel**

The prophet Ezekiel lived in the sixth century BC, and he witnessed a number of terrible things happen to Israel. In his early years Ezekiel watched the majority of Israel’s religious and political leaders slide into apostasy and paganism and he saw the nation grow weak and fall under the domination of the powerful kingdom of Babylon. In 597 BC Ezekiel was among 3,000 Jewish captives taken to Babylon, and in 586 BC the city of Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by Babylonian armies.

The message of Ezekiel was primarily a message of accusation and warning to Israel predicting captivity and desolation for Israel’s crimes against God. There are forty-eight chapters in the book of Ezekiel and this message of judgment upon Israel lasts up to chapter 25. The next eight chapters deal with the Gentile nations that surround Israel

and God accuses them of taking pleasure in Israel's misfortunes and decrees a judgment upon each one of them as well. After giving messages of judgment and predictions of punishment to Israel and to her neighbors the prophet Ezekiel then gives some very provocative messages regarding Israel's restoration as a nation in chapters 34, 36 and 37.

Because of the time in which Ezekiel lived the prophecies of Israel's restoration are misinterpreted by many commentators to be messages concerned with the restoration of Israel that followed the Babylonian captivity. However, this is clearly not the case. Chapter 34 of Ezekiel does not predict Israel's return from exile in Babylon, but instead gives a prophecy of Israel's final and complete restoration at a point after the resurrection, when David himself will be Israel's king.

Ezekiel 36 is also clear that a return from Babylon is not the focus, because Israel is referred to as having been scattered among all the *nations*, plural. Israel is referred to as a "*possession of the rest of the nations*" that has been "*plundered and ridiculed by the rest of the nations.*" Israel is described as having suffered the "*scorn of the nations*" and endured the "*taunts of the nations.*"

Ezekiel 37 continues the theme of Israel's restoration with a vision in which Ezekiel sees the people of Israel represented as a valley of dry bones. All hope has been lost and the people cry out "*Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.*" In spite of this hopeless situation Ezekiel watches as the bones grow flesh and stand upon their feet completely healed and whole. God says, "*I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land.*"

The Jewish return from the Babylonian exile was predicted to take place after seventy years of captivity. Jeremiah made the prediction (25:11-12, 29:10) and the prophet Daniel was very aware when the time had come for the exile to be ended (9:2). All hope had not been lost and although

the people were discouraged they were not without hope or at their deepest possible point of despair.

Another thing that separates the Babylonian restoration from the restoration that Ezekiel predicts is the fact that the Jews returned to Israel as believers, led by holy men such as Nehemiah, Ezra, Joshua and Zerubbabel. The end-times regathering of Israel, on the other hand, is predicted by Ezekiel (and many others prophets) to take place while Israel and her leaders are still “*profaning God’s holy name.*”

The end-times regathering of Israel to her land, from throughout the entire world, is actually predicted by the prophets to take place in two stages. The first stage is a regathering in unbelief which has resulted in the modern nation of Israel, which was born partly out of the ashes of the holocaust during which the Jews were indeed almost completely discouraged and without hope. The second stage is the final regathering and restoration of Israel from throughout the world, and also from throughout time, because it will come after the resurrection. In this final restoration unbelievers will not be included.

It is the first stage of Israel’s regathering that is important for our world today. The prophet Ezekiel explains why this regathering will occur and why Israel was dispersed in the first place in Ezekiel 36:19-24,

“I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, ‘These are the LORD’s people, and yet they had to leave his land.’ I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.

Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is

what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes. For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.’”

Israel was dispersed and scattered from the land because of her conduct and actions, and she will be regathered again to her land *despite* her bad conduct and *despite* the fact that she continues to profane God’s holy name. The passage above continues to state that one day Israel will remember her “*evil ways and wicked deeds*” and repent of her “*sins and detestable practices*,” which reinforces the conclusion that modern-day Israel is not a political entity that should be blindly and wholeheartedly supported in everything that it does.

Another text that clearly predicts a regathering of Israel to her land while in a state of unbelief is Zephaniah 2:1-3,

“Gather together, gather together, O shameful nation, before the appointed time arrives and that day sweeps on like chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the LORD’s wrath comes upon you. Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD’s anger.”

Israel, that shameful nation, is predicted to be gathered together in preparation for the judgments that will occur within the Day of the Lord. This is the context through which the modern nation of Israel should be understood. God loves Israel and will always honor His promises to her, but today she is characterized by adjectives such as *evil*, *wicked*, *detestable* and *shameful*. Because of this she must first pass through a period of judgment that will bring her to repentance. Only then will she finally and completely be regathered (a second time—Isaiah 11:11-12) to enjoy the fulfillment of God's promises to her.

### **The Invasion of Israel**

The prophet Ezekiel predicts a major military invasion of Israel that will take place *after* Israel has been regathered from the world in unbelief, but *before* her repentance and complete restoration.

According to Ezekiel 38 the invasion of Israel will be led by a man named Gog, from the land of Magog, who is the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. He will lead a coalition army that will include the nations of Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer and Beth Togarmah.

In modern terms really the only identification that scholars can agree upon is Iran for Persia. Magog is identified as either Russia or Turkey; Meshech and Tubal are viewed as either places in Russia or places in Turkey; Cush is viewed as either Sudan or Ethiopia; Put is viewed as either Libya or Somalia; Gomer is viewed as Germany and Togarmah is viewed as Armenia, while both are also viewed by some scholars, once again, as places in modern Turkey. As political events change in the world today Russia is increasingly being downplayed as the possible anchor of the alliance, while Turkey is emerging as a new favorite.

After Ezekiel introduces the coalition army, he then gives a description of Israel at the time of the unexpected invasion,

“After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in **safety**. You and all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land.

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. You will say, ‘I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a **peaceful** and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars. I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins and the people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the center of the land.’

Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages will say to you, ‘Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?’

Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In that day, when my people Israel are living in **safety**, will you not take notice of it? You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army. You will advance against my people Israel like

a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.’” (Ezekiel 38:8-16)

By far the dominant theme regarding Israel is the fact that she will be existing in a state of “*peace and safety*” prior to the invasion. Israel will be peaceful and unsuspecting, prosperous and wealthy, and living in safety in villages without walls and without gates or bars. This peacefulness and lack of awareness on Israel’s part adds to the confidence of the invaders who will believe their victory is assured. Ezekiel continues to tell us that this will prompt God to act in defense of his people,

“This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign LORD. In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground.” (Ezekiel 38:18-20)

The feeling of safety and security in Israel prior to the invasion will be followed by chaos and destruction when God causes an earthquake to strike. First it will be felt in Israel, but then it will quickly expand to be felt worldwide, causing the fish, the birds, the beasts, every creature on the ground and every human being on the face of the earth to tremble at the presence of God!

Before we move on we should pause to consider the



importance of what happens here according to Ezekiel. Israel will be invaded by a group of nations, none of which directly border her, in a sneak attack, and God will respond to this aggression with anger and wrath. However, the first outburst from God will not be directed at the invading armies or upon the invading nations, but will instead be felt in the form of an earthquake *in Israel* that will quickly change into a globally-felt event. The destructive nature of this global event is described (and hopefully exaggerated) by Ezekiel who writes that as a result of it “*mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground.*”

Let's return again to the words of Paul, who described how the Day of the Lord would begin, and also to the sixth Seal of Revelation that includes within it the beginning of the Day of the Lord,

“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”  
(1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)

“I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and

among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’” (Revelation 6:12-17)

There are at least five similarities between the events described in Ezekiel 38:1-20 and the accounts of the beginning of the Day of the Lord according to the sixth Seal and the words of Paul:

1. Both sources mention “*peace and safety*” prior to the catastrophic events. Ezekiel describes Israel living in peace, safety and security, while Paul simply tells us that “*people*” will be saying “*peace and safety*” prior to the outbreak of the Day of the Lord.

2. Both sources describe the judgment as a surprise and causing great destruction. Ezekiel describes Israel as “*unsuspecting*” and the destruction that comes afterward causes mountains, cliffs and walls to fall down. Paul says the Day of the Lord will come like a “*thief in the night*” and that it will bring “*sudden destruction.*” The sixth Seal explains that this destruction comes in the form of a shaking of the entire earth.

3. Both events begin with a local earthquake that is followed by a global shaking. The first event of the sixth seal is simply a “*great earthquake*” and the area affected is not specified. Ezekiel does specify, however, when he says plainly that *Israel* will be the location of this preliminary earthquake. In both sources the shaking of the entire earth comes after the preliminary local earthquake.

4. In all of the accounts the reaction from humanity is very similar. Ezekiel recorded the very words of God who said that during the shaking of the earth “*all the people on*

*the face of the earth will tremble at my presence.”* In Revelation everyone flees to the mountains and caves to hide and the people cry out, *“Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”* In Isaiah’s description the people know that God has acted and they flee to the caves to hide from the *“splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.”*

5. The fifth similarity concerns the specific reference to “*God’s wrath*” in both accounts, and the fact that this wrath is felt on a completely global scale. Every human being on earth will be affected when the Day of the Lord begins. In Ezekiel the judgment begins after God says *“In my zeal and fiery **wrath**...”* and in Revelation the people who flee to the caves admit that they flee to hide *“from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the **wrath of the Lamb!** For the great day of **their wrath** has come...”* The usage of the term “*wrath*” is closely connected with the many prophecies of the Day of the Lord, which is always described as a completely *global* period of testing and judgment.

These similarities are very provocative, but should they lead to the conclusion that each of these sources—Ezekiel, Isaiah, Paul and the book of Revelation—give similar descriptions of the *same* event? In a previous chapter I argued against the automatic assumption that similarity equals sameness with regard to some of the Seal, Trumpet and Bowl judgments. However, in this case I believe that the similarities are so precise and so overwhelming that it would be foolish to dismiss them without a closer look.

The question to ask is, could the event described by Ezekiel be a description of a similar event that will take place at a different time, either prior to or after the “Day of the Lord” events of the sixth seal? We will return to this question at the end of the chapter, but first we must continue

with our study because we are not finished pointing out the similarities between Ezekiel's prophecies of this event and the book of Revelation.

In Revelation there is a precise sequence of events after the global shaking that marks the beginning of the Day of the Lord. First, the angels who blow the first four Trumpets are told to wait, and then 144,000 Jews are mystically converted and sealed with the seal of God. After the sealing of the 144,000 is described on the earth, then the heavenly scene is described, of a vast body of joyful believers congregating before Jesus and before God's throne (see the next chapter). After these events take place then the seventh Seal is opened by Jesus and the judgments upon the earth continue,

“When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. The first angel sounded his trumpet, **and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth.** A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.” (Revelation 8:1-7)

In Ezekiel there is an event very similar to the first Trumpet event that affects a large portion of the earth after God first vents his wrath by shaking the earth. Here is the entire description from the beginning of God's angry declaration,

“This is what will happen in that day: ‘When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused,’ declares the Sovereign LORD.

‘In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground.

I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign LORD. Every man's sword will be against his brother. **I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him.** And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.’

Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel.

Then I will strike your bow from your left hand and make your arrows drop from your right hand.

On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. **I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands**, and they will know that I am the LORD.’” (Ezekiel 38:18 to 39:6)

God will deal directly with the army that invades Israel, but only *after* His wrath is first vented on a completely global scale by shaking the entire earth. Only then will God focus on the invaders that sparked His wrath in the first place, smiting them with a plague of hail and fire from the sky. The manner in which the invading armies are destroyed is strikingly similar to the first Trumpet judgment of Revelation,

Ezekiel: *I will execute judgment upon him with plague and **bloodshed**; I will **pour down** torrents of rain, **hailstones** and **burning sulfur**...*

Revelation: *The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came **hail** and **fire** mixed with **blood**, and it was **hurled down** upon the earth...*

Both sources describe *blood* or *bloodshed*, *hail* or *hailstones* and *fire* or *burning sulfur*, which is *poured down* or *hurled down* upon the earth.

Ezekiel continues to state that it is not only the invading troops that will suffer from the burning plague from the skies, but the “*many nations*” that are members of the alliance will be struck by this deadly calamity as well. At the end of the description the area that is included within the judgment is expanded even more to include the “*coastlands*” where people live in “*safety*.”

The descriptions in Revelation explain that the judgment

of hailstones and fire from heaven results in the intense burning of one third of the earth's surface. In Ezekiel's description, if the land area of all of the nations that are involved in the attack upon Israel is added up and the enigmatic reference to the "*coastlands*" is included, it cannot be denied that a third of the earth could be affected. This vast area would include the nations of Iran, Turkey, a great section of northern Africa, and perhaps even part of Europe if Gomer is indeed Germany. Additionally, if Magog is Russia then a huge section of the Eurasian landmass would be included as well. This almost adds up to a third of the earth's land surface without even bringing the unknown area of the "*coastlands*" into the equation.

As we have explained, Ezekiel's description of this end-times invasion of Israel and the subsequent destruction of the invaders and of a large portion of the earth has many parallels that appear to connect it with the sixth Seal and first Trumpet of Revelation. In addition to these descriptions Ezekiel goes on to describe the clean-up procedures after the invaders have been destroyed and after the devastation from the sky has ceased. These descriptions of the aftermath are important because they include a major clue that allows us to connect this series of events with the seventieth week of Daniel.

Before we move on to the descriptions of the cleanup we must make a decision about how the series of events in Ezekiel are related to the similar series of events that are described in Revelation. Recall that in the last chapter we pointed out that a massive shaking of the earth is predicted in Revelation *twice*: once within the sixth Seal, and again at the very end with the pouring out of the seventh Bowl,

"The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'It is done!' Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder

and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake... Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.” (Revelation 16:17-20)

The sixth Seal is similar to, but distinct from, the seventh Bowl, because the sixth Seal marks the *beginning* of the Day of the Lord, while the seventh Bowl marks the point when “*It is done!*” This tells us that the Day of the Lord both begins and ends with a great cosmic/global catastrophe.

The events in Ezekiel 38-39 also contain such a catastrophe, but it could only be related to the sixth Seal event and not to the ending event at the seventh Bowl. One of the reasons for this is that Ezekiel describes a limited invasion of Israel composed of just a few specific nations, whereas the seventh Bowl is preceded by an occupation of Israel that includes the armies from *all the nations of the world*.

The Ezekiel event is indeed similar to the sixth Seal and first Trumpet events, but is this similarity enough to conclude that they are both descriptions of the same *single* event? If not, then we must imagine that these events are repeated. This would mean that there would be two series of events that begin with a local earthquake, that is followed by a shaking of the entire earth, and culminates with a destructive shower of burning hailstones from the sky. Each event is described as a sudden and unexpected outpouring of God’s wrath, and each event catches humanity by surprise and affects every human being on a personal spiritual level, causing great fear and anxiety. These two similar but separate series of events would then be followed by a third similar event at the end of the Day of the Lord.



I believe that the hypothetical scenario above is redundant to the point of absurdity, and that without any other Biblical support for *three* similar catastrophes we should stick with the *two* that are described in Revelation. This would mean that the similarities between Ezekiel 38-39 and the sixth Seal/first Trumpet events are indeed enough to conclude that they are descriptions of the very same event. The similarities are just too precise and too many in number to conclude otherwise.

## **Seven Years**

The description of the cleanup procedures following the invasion of Israel is given in Ezekiel 39:9-16. The tens of thousands of dead bodies will be gathered and buried and the initial cleanup will last for seven months. After the initial cleanup is over bodies will still be found in the land here and there and Ezekiel says that when this happens markers will be set up next to the remains and the authorities will be called to retrieve the bodies and bury them properly.

This peculiar description leads some Bible commentators to believe that the bodies are somehow toxic and that this is evidence that chemical or biological weapons will be used in the battle. This is possible, but I would say much too speculative. Dead bodies are always a health hazard, and their deaths are clearly depicted by Ezekiel to come from God, rather than from other human agents.

The most important aspect of the cleanup, however, is the cleanup of the captured weapons of war that will be used by the villages of Israel for fuel. The language used by Ezekiel is archaic and the meaning must be reinterpreted in a modern setting, but the most important point is clear,

“I will send fire on Magog and on those who

live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the LORD. I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel. It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign LORD. This is the day I have spoken of.

Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up—the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. **For seven years they will use them for fuel.** They will not need to gather wood from the fields or cut it from the forests, because they will use the weapons for fuel. And they will plunder those who plundered them and loot those who looted them, declares the Sovereign LORD.” (Ezekiel 39:6-10)

Ezekiel used his limited Old Testament Hebrew vocabulary to explain how Israel would be able to use the captured weapons of the invading army as a source of fuel. In a modern context the fuel source is probably not wood, but perhaps petroleum, nuclear energy, or some other fuel instead. The size of the plundered supply of fuel is not specifically given (perhaps it is a ten year supply or even a fifteen year supply), but Ezekiel does tell us that it will be *used* by Israel for exactly seven years. I believe that this seven year period corresponds exactly with the seventieth week of Daniel and now I will explain why.

There are three possibilities for viewing this specific seven year period that follows the catastrophes described in Ezekiel and Revelation, as it relates to the seventieth week, but there is only one that makes sense. The seventieth week, as the reader may recall, is the final seven year period that will begin when a Roman prince (perhaps a Roman Catholic

Pope) signs a covenant or treaty with Israel. The Temple must be rebuilt somewhere during this time because the renewed Temple sacrifices and offerings are stopped three and a half years after the treaty is first signed. The seventieth week then ends at the Second Coming of Jesus, when the Antichrist is destroyed and afterwards Israel and the earth will be renovated to prepare the Millennial Kingdom of the Messiah.

The first possibility is that the seven years of Ezekiel begin sometime *after* the seventieth week of Daniel has already begun. The single insurmountable problem for this view is that this would mean that Israel would continue to burn the weapons captured from the Magog invaders for a time extending into the Messianic Kingdom. It is absurd to think that this source of fuel would be needed by Israel after the earth has been renovated and the Messianic Kingdom has begun, and in fact two Old Testament prophets give proof that this simply cannot be the case. In Isaiah 2:4 and in Micah 4:3 the prophets very clearly tells us that if any weapons do make it into the Messianic Age they will not be used for fuel or any other purpose, but will instead be transformed into agricultural equipment!

“He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”

“He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”

This is but one reason why it is highly unlikely that the seven years of Ezekiel begin any time *after* the seventieth week of Daniel has begun.

The second possibility is that the seven years of Ezekiel begin sometime *before* the seventieth week of Daniel begins. This is the view held by many prophecy scholars who do not place the beginning of the Day of the Lord within the sixth Seal. An argument for this view is that Ezekiel's burning of the captured fuel supply could not continue into the second half of the seventieth week because at the midpoint of the seventieth week Israel flees into the desert to escape the Antichrist. This view maintains that the Magog invasion must then occur *at least* three and a half years *before* the signing of the covenant that begins the seventieth week, to allow for the seven year period of burning the captured fuel to expire prior to the midpoint of the seventieth week.

This view is problematic because it concludes that there will be two separate sequences of events prior to the midpoint of the seventieth week in which God will surprise mankind with a global outpouring of wrath in the form of a shaking of the earth and a plague of burning meteors from the sky. For me this is simply too absurd and illogical to accept.

This view can also be refuted by showing that the problem that it highlights is really no problem at all. It depends upon the premise that Israel could *not* burn its captured fuel supply into the second half of the seventieth week, but this premise is simply false. It is true that Jesus warns Israel to flee to the desert at the midpoint of the seventieth week, but this does not mean that *all* of Israel will obey. There will still be Israelites within Jerusalem and within the villages of Israel even during the final 42-month period when the Antichrist reigns from Jerusalem. These are the inhabitants that would continue to depend on the fuel captured from the Magog invaders to power Israel's infrastructure all the way

up to the end of the seventieth week.

This leads us to the final and most reasonable conclusion, which is that the seven year period, during which Israel burns the fuel plundered from the invading armies, is the *very same* as the seven year period of the seventieth week that begins with a covenant between Israel and the Roman prince. Here are two reasons why this conclusion makes sense:

1. The destruction of the Magog invasion will create the proper political climate allowing for the seventieth week covenant to be signed. The coalition that invades Israel is predominantly a Muslim coalition with Iran and perhaps Turkey being most prominent. Sudan is also a Muslim nation and so is Libya and Somalia, which are all potential members. When this coalition invades Israel she will be existing in a state of “*peace and safety*” that implies that her closest Muslim enemies have already been neutralized. This successful war against Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinians and perhaps Egypt will be discussed in a future chapter, but the point to be made is that the destruction of the Magog alliance will bring to an end the power of Islam, at least with respect to it being any sort of threat to Israel.

This situation will allow for the creation of a Judeo-“Christian” agreement between Israel and the Vatican (the Roman prince) that will not need to take into account the interests of the neighboring Islamic nations. In this way the seventieth week covenant could be signed in the aftermath of the Magog invasion, which would correspond with the seven years during which Israel would be burning the fuel plundered from the fallen invading forces.

2. The destruction of the Magog invasion will also create the proper *religious* climate that would be supportive of a rebuilt Temple, which is also an event closely connected with the seventieth week covenant. Today Israel is politically

dominated by secular leaders, and the religious faction, even though it is very vocal, is actually a small minority that has little say in Israel's affairs. Ezekiel predicts that this secular climate will characterize Israel as a nation up until the invasion, but the miraculous destruction of the invaders will then cause Israel to turn back to God and to her faith:

**“I will make known my holy name among my people Israel.** I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel. It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign LORD. This is the day I have spoken of...

On that day I will give Gog a burial place in Israel... For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. All the people of the land will bury them, **and the day I am glorified will be a memorable day for them,** declares the Sovereign LORD...

I will display my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see the punishment I inflict and the hand I lay upon them. **From that day forward the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God.**

And the nations will know that the people of Israel went into exile for their sin, because they were unfaithful to me. So I hid my face from them and handed them over to their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their offenses, and I hid my face from them.

Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name.

**They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid.” (Ezekiel 39:7-26)**

After God’s wrath is provoked by the invasion of the Magog alliance He will strike out and miraculously destroy the invaders at the moment of Israel’s greatest need. Israel’s destruction will appear to be certain but God will rise up to personally eliminate the threat. In the aftermath of this miraculous rescue the inhabitants of Israel will undergo at least a partial spiritual transformation and realize a newfound faith in the God of their fathers. In this climate, with Islam neutralized as a threat, the way will be paved for the Temple to be rebuilt on top of the plateau where it once stood.

The rebuilding of the Temple is something that God *expects* Israel to do. After it is built it will be *God’s Temple*, as the Apostle Paul refers to it in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The Temple will be a good thing and it will be proof that Israel is at least trying to become reconciled with God. However, the sacrifices that will be offered in this Temple will be viewed by God in a harshly negative light, as the prophet Isaiah has written in the very last chapter of his book,

“This is what the LORD says: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. **Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?** Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the LORD. ‘This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. **But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a man, and whoever offers a lamb, like one who breaks a dog’s neck; whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig’s blood, and**

**whoever burns memorial incense, like one who worships an idol.**

They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations; so I also will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me.’” (Isaiah 66:1-4)

In the text above God begins by asking where His house is, but then He goes on to condemn those who offer sacrifices and offerings in His house after it is built. These sacrifices will be viewed as an abomination and an insult in His sight, because God has already offered the ultimate and perfect sacrifice for mankind’s sins in the form of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Any sacrifice that attempts to do what Jesus has already done is irrelevant as far as the sinner is concerned, and also the greatest possible insult as far as God is concerned.

Isaiah’s words continue with another reference to the Temple, and the modern nation of Israel is also mentioned, which was indeed created in a single day (May 15, 1948),

“Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word: ‘Your brothers who hate you, and exclude you because of my name, have said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy!’ Yet they will be put to shame. **Hear that uproar from the city, hear that noise from the temple!** It is the sound of the LORD repaying his enemies all they deserve.

Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever



seen such things? **Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment?** Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.’” (Isaiah 66:5-8)

The destruction of the Magog invasion will create the climate in which the rebuilding of the Temple will actually be *supported* by the majority of Israel’s citizens. It will also create a political climate that will be conducive to the signing of a treaty between Israel and the “Roman prince” that marks the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel’s epic prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

After all of the possibilities are considered the most reasonable conclusion is that the seven year period that follows the Magog invasion in Ezekiel *is the same as* the seven year period that will begin with the signing of the seventieth week covenant. The burning of captured weapons will end precisely after seven years, because at that point Jesus will return and the seventieth week will also end. The earth will then be miraculously renewed and a fuel source derived from captured weapons will no longer be necessary.

## Conclusion

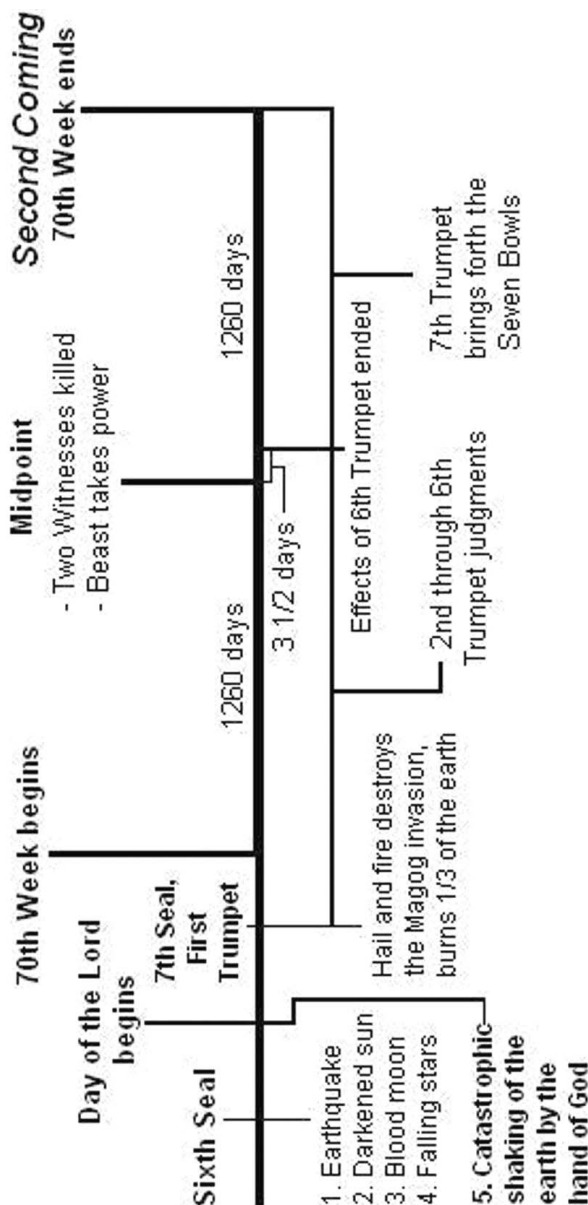
This chapter has been filled with a great deal of information and a number of different views and arguments have been considered. All of this material may have been overwhelming for readers who are new to the study of Bible prophecy, but the purpose of this chapter has been quite simple.

The similarities between the events described in Ezekiel 38-39 and the “Day of the Lord” events described in the sixth Seal and first Trumpet judgments of Revelation have been highlighted, and the conclusion was drawn that they are separate descriptions of the *same* event.

Building upon this conclusion the seven year period that follows the Ezekiel events has been compared with the seven year period that begins with the seventieth week covenant made between Israel and a Roman leader. After examining each of these seven year time periods we have concluded that they refer to the very *same* time period, beginning sometime after the first Trumpet judgment of Revelation.

With this chapter complete we have now pinpointed the beginning, midpoint and end of the seventieth week in relation to the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls of Revelation, and the prophetic picture that was once obscure is now becoming much more clear. The chart on the next page shows our prophetic timeline as it has been developed thus far.

## The Day of the Lord and the 70th Week





# Chapter Seven:

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## The Red Moon Rapture

**“*T*he Rapture”** is the term used to describe the moment when Jesus Christ will return to the atmosphere above the earth to snatch his believers off of the face of the earth and take them to heaven. Jesus promised that he would one day do this and his promise was recorded in the Gospel of John,

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:1-3 KJV)

God the Father lives in heaven and Jesus said that he would go there to prepare a place for us, after which he would come back and take us to live with him there. The Apostle Paul wrote that when Jesus comes back for the living believers he would also gather all of the dead believers and that this resurrection would immediately precede the rapture:

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

The Greek word for “*caught up*” is the word *harpazo*, which is translated as *rapturo* in the Latin Vulgate Bible, which is how the “*catching up*” of living believers into heaven has come to be known as “*The Rapture*.” In a letter to the Corinthians Paul wrote that the change to both dead and living believers at the time of the rapture will be completed in a split-second,

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written

will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’” (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)

The reference to the “*last trumpet*” in this passage should not be confused with the seventh Trumpet of Revelation, which is a mistake made by some Bible scholars. By referring to the “*last trumpet*” Paul was simply implying that the rapture would be the prophetic fulfillment of the Jewish holy day of Rosh Hoshanah, which involves the use of such a “*last trumpet*.” A similar idea is expressed when the death of Jesus is said to fulfill the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur in Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 2:17 and Hebrews 9.

The “coming” of Jesus Christ into the earth’s atmosphere to rapture and resurrect the saints is a separate event from the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to the earth at the end of the tribulation period. When Jesus “comes” to gather and take the saints to heaven he will remain invisible to human eyes and his feet will not touch the ground. On the other hand, at the Second Coming every eye will see Jesus coming on the clouds (Matthew 24:30, Revelation 1:7), and then his feet will touch the ground just as it clearly states in Zechariah 14:4, “*On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives...*”

After the rapture and resurrection believers will live in heaven with Jesus and God the Father for a period of time (a minimum of seven years) until the Second Coming takes place. Jesus will then return to the earth with the saints and the Messianic Kingdom will be established. Israel will be regathered and restored a final time, and then the earth will experience peace for a thousand years, with Jesus reigning as king from the holy city of Jerusalem.

The “coming” of Jesus for the purpose of taking his believers to heaven will occur at an unknown day, while the Second Coming of Jesus to the earth to set up the Messianic

Kingdom will occur at a known day, precisely at the end of the seventieth week of Daniel. The rapture will occur when life is going on as normal and the world is unsuspecting, while the return of Jesus to the earth will occur after the most terrible time of tribulation the world has ever seen. The “coming” of Jesus to rapture and resurrect the saints will precede the Day of the Lord, which will come upon the wicked “*like a thief in the night*,” whereas the actual Second Coming of Jesus to the earth will be *anticipated* and challenged by the armies of all the nations of the world that will gather at Armageddon.

There are many passages that connect the rapture of living believers on this “unknown day” with the beginning of the Day of the Lord. In the last chapter we mentioned two specific passages in which Peter and Paul state that the Day of the Lord would come “*like a thief in the night*” (1 Thessalonians 5:2 and 2 Peter 3:10). This metaphor was well-known to the Apostles and to the early Church because it was first used by Jesus during his end-times talk on the Mount of Olives. In his Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24, after describing the specific events that would occur before and during the Day of the Lord, Jesus referred to the “unknown day” of the rapture,

**“No one knows about that day or hour,** not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away.

That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be



taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore keep watch, because **you do not know on what day your Lord will come.**

But understand this: If the owner of the house had known **at what time of night the thief was coming**, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (Matthew 24:36-44)

Peter and Paul both connected the “*day*” in which the “*Lord will come*” that Jesus referred to, with the Day of the Lord, using the same “*thief in the night*” metaphor. Paul says not to worry about “*times and dates*” when it comes to this unknown day, and Peter tells believers not to be discouraged if it seems that the Lord is slow in keeping his promise to come back for us,

**Paul:** “Now, brothers, **about times and dates we do not need to write to you**, for you know very well that the day of the Lord *will come like a thief in the night.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2)

**Peter:** “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord *will come like a thief.* The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” (2 Peter 3:9-10)

In the Olivet Discourse Jesus predicted that the situation

on the earth prior to the Day of the Lord would be similar to the peaceful situation prior to Noah's flood. This is echoed by Paul's description of "*peace and safety*" prior to the Day of the Lord that he gives in 1 Thessalonians 5:3. The Day of the Lord will then intrude on this relative "*peacefulness*" with a suddenness and intensity almost equaling that of the flood, and according to Jesus on that day "*one will be taken and the other left.*"

Jesus gave a much clearer promise that believers will be raptured immediately prior to the Day of the Lord in a portion of the Olivet Discourse that was recorded in the Gospel of Luke. In this passage he again explains that the world will be existing in a relatively peaceful atmosphere, in which the biggest temptations to believers will be parties, overindulgence in food and drink, and the everyday problems of life,

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and **that day** will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. **Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen**, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:34-36)

In this text Jesus clearly predicts that believers will be able to "*escape*" the terrible devastation of the Day of the Lord and "*all that is about to happen*," and that the destination of their escape will be heaven where they will "*stand before the Son of Man*." On the other hand, unbelievers will not be spiritually prepared and Paul says "*they will not escape*" in his important passage in 1 Thessalonians,

"Now, brothers, about times and dates we do

not need to write to you, for you know very well that **the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night**. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, **and they will not escape**.

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breast-plate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

**For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.** He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-10)

Again Paul echoes the words of Jesus, who warned of the temptations of drunkenness and overindulgence, by admonishing his readers to “*be alert and self-controlled*” and to focus instead on faith, love and hope. In the end faithful believers can be assured that “*God did not appoint us to suffer wrath, but to receive salvation.*” This is not the broader “*salvation*” that believers gain through faith in Christ, but a very specific “*salvation*” from the wrath of the Day of the Lord. Paul echoes this promise in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 when he writes of “*Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.*”

When we examine the words of Paul along with the words of Jesus we learn that prior to the Day of the Lord

unbelievers will be unworried and saying “*peace and safety*” but faithful believers will be watching and praying and will therefore be spiritually prepared for the coming of the Day of the Lord. This preparedness will be rewarded at the rapture when all true believers will be “*rescued*” from the earth just before God’s wrath begins with the Day of the Lord. Because of their faithfulness believers will “*escape all that is about to happen*,” but for the unbelievers who say “*peace and safety*” and scoff at the possibility of Christ’s return, and for professing believers who do not spiritually prepare themselves, the Day of the Lord will begin suddenly and “*unexpectedly like a trap*” and “*they will not escape.*”

**The rapture and resurrection of believers that is predicted by Jesus in the Gospels and by Paul in his Letters is fulfilled in the book of Revelation in the description of events from the opening of the fifth seal up until the opening of the seventh seal.**

## **The Rapture and Resurrection in the Book of Revelation**

“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll,

rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ‘Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.’ Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel...

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: ‘Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!’

Then one of the elders asked me, ‘These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?’ I answered, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said, ‘These are they

who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 6:9 to 7:17)

According to Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 the “*dead in Christ*,” meaning the many Christian believers who have died since Jesus was crucified, will be resurrected immediately before the living believers are raptured from the earth to heaven. Preparation for this resurrection is hinted at within the fifth Seal, which can be broken down into the following outline:

**I. A Picture of the Martyrs-** “I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.”

**II. The Question-** “They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’”

**III. The Gift-** “Then each of them was given a white robe...”

**IV. The Answer-** “...and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they

had been was completed.”

The altar is a special place in heaven where the souls of the saints who have been slain for spreading the Gospel are kept. At the opening of the fifth Seal these souls cry out impatiently asking when the final judgment of the earth is to take place, so that their deaths might be avenged.

In the previous chapter we concluded that the seventieth week will not begin until sometime after the first Trumpet judgment. The Question that the martyrs ask is further evidence that our conclusion is correct, because if the seventieth week had already begun then the martyrs would have known that the judgment was, at most, seven years away. The Question that the martyrs ask, as well as the vague Answer they get, is further evidence that the seventieth week must begin sometime *after* the fifth Seal is opened.

Some scholars mistake the Question that the martyrs ask to be “*When will we be resurrected?*” The answer to the Question is then read to mean that the souls of the martyrs must wait until the final judgment to be resurrected. To avoid this mistake we must be clear that the question is not “*When will we be resurrected?*” but “*When will the earth be judged?*” The martyrs are told they must wait until the end for the final judgment, but they are told this *after* they receive their special Gift of white robes.

John, who witnessed these events, may have only witnessed the souls of the martyrs receiving white robes, but this does not mean that only the martyrs received white robes. The souls of believers who died of natural causes might in fact be held in a location other than under the altar, and they may have received the Gift as well.

In any case the evidence supports the conclusion that this Gift either represents, or is in preparation for, the Resurrection. It is part of a profound change that takes place to believers in heaven during the time before the fifth Seal is

opened to the time after the sixth Seal. First the souls that John sees exist *under the altar* without white robes, and then after the sixth Seal events have concluded we see a scene of a great multitude of believers standing *in front of the throne* and in front of Jesus, and all of them are wearing white robes.

Certainly the change from existing under the altar to standing in front of the throne, and from at first not possessing white robes to finally wearing white robes, is evidence of a profound transition to believers in heaven, a transition that is marked by the Gift and a transition that, once completed, can only be explained by the rapture and resurrection.

The fifth Seal concludes with the Gift of white robes to the souls in heaven, after which Jesus will open the sixth Seal and then enter the earth's atmosphere to resurrect the bodies of dead believers and rapture the living believers off of the earth into the sky. Living believers will then meet the newly resurrected dead believers "*in the air*" as Paul predicts in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, and then the entrance of this "*great multitude*" into heaven is pictured in Revelation 7:9-17.

The resurrection and rapture will happen "*in the twinkling of an eye*" at the same time or immediately prior to the initial sixth Seal events take place on the earth, which explains the title of this chapter and of the chronological model of prophetic events presented in this book: "The Red Moon Rapture."

## The Signs of a Resurrection

The resurrection that occurs prior to the beginning of the Day of the Lord within the sixth Seal is not the first mass resurrection of souls. The first *group* resurrection occurred almost 2000 years ago at the moment Jesus died upon the cross,



“From the sixth hour until the ninth hour **darkness came over all the land**. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’—which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ ...And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. **The earth shook** and the rocks split. **The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life**. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.” (Matthew 27:45-53)

The two signs that occurred at the resurrection of this select group of Old Testament saints at the moment of the death of Jesus were: 1) a darkening of the sun, 2) an earthquake. These signs are also the first two signs that will be seen after the opening of the sixth Seal,

“I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair...”

This is further evidence that the resurrection of the “*dead in Christ*” occurs right after the opening of the sixth Seal.

## **Only Unbelievers Remain**

The wrath of the Day of the Lord begins with the shaking of the entire earth, and the people on the earth respond to it in fear and terror by crying out to the rocks on the mountains, “*Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the*

*great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"*

This suicidal cry is made by *"the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man."* Since every man is either a slave or a free man it is clear that Revelation is telling us that every person on the face of the earth will respond in this manner, and that at this point in time there are no believers present upon the earth. The rapture will take every true believer to heaven, leaving only false believers and unbelievers to cry out in fear when the Day of the Lord begins on the earth.

### **The Firstfruits from an Unbelieving World**

After the earth is shaken and every human being is made to tremble at the power and majesty of God the next event is the sealing of the 144,000,

“After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ‘Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.’ Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.” (Revelation 7:1-4)

The 144,000 will be a specific group of *Jewish* men who God will reach out to and supernaturally convert, perhaps in a way similar to Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus. They will then be sealed with the seal of God which will

give them protection from the effects of the fifth Trumpet judgment (Revelation 9:4). They are described further in Revelation 14:4-5,

“These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as **firstfruits** to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.”

The designation of the 144,000 as the “*firstfruits*” offered to God and the Lamb only makes sense if it is understood that they will be the very first human beings converted to faith in Jesus Christ once the earth is left with only unbelievers after the rapture. They will be the first to believe and be saved out of a world temporarily empty of true believers.

## **The Appearance of the Great Multitude**

The resurrection and rapture of dead and living believers from the earth will take place immediately after the opening of the sixth Seal. After John views the opening of the sixth Seal in heaven his attention becomes focused on the earth and he views the effects of the five events. After watching mankind’s reaction to the beginning of the Day of the Lord, and after watching the sealing of the 144,000 on the earth, John’s attention is shifted once more to his surroundings in heaven. This is when he sees the results of the resurrection and rapture:

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, **from every nation, tribe, people and language**, stand-

ing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’”

The resurrection and rapture is the only event that will result in the appearance of such an innumerable multitude in heaven. At all other times the souls of deceased believers stream into heaven one by one or in groups, but at the resurrection and rapture the entire body of believers will be entering heaven at the same time.

Earlier, during the events that preceded the opening of the seals in heaven, John was able to hear the twenty-four elders explain what the death of Jesus Christ accomplished for humanity,

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God **from every tribe and language and people and nation.**”  
(Revelation 5:9)

The great multitude is described using the exact same language. They were purchased and saved by the death of Jesus whom they praise, and they come “*from every nation, tribe, people and language.*”

The great multitude is made up completely of living believers. They wear white robes, they hold palm branches, and they stand before the throne of God and serve Him in the heavenly Temple. Nowhere is the great multitude described as being made up of the souls of dead believers. The souls of dead believers are kept in temporary holding areas, such as under the altar, and John easily recognized such souls at the opening of the fifth Seal, but when asked who

the great multitude is John is unsure and refuses to reply.

The great multitude is also shown at the end of the book of Revelation at the moment when Christ is ready to make His triumphant return,

“After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a **great multitude** in heaven shouting: ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments...’ Then a voice came from the throne, saying: ‘Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!’ Then I heard what sounded like a **great multitude**, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.’ (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)” (Revelation 19:1-8)

There is no question that the great multitude at the end of the book of Revelation is the great multitude of raptured and resurrected saints, known also simply as “The Church.” It is the same “great multitude” that is shown wearing white robes in heaven after the sixth Seal, and they shout the same message. After the sixth Seal they shout, “*Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne...*” and after the seventh Bowl they shout, “*Salvation and glory and power belong to our God...*”

The reference to the great multitude as God’s “*bride*” is a clear reference to God’s true Church, which is an allegory Paul used in 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:25-27. If the great multitude at the end of Revelation is the same as the great multitude in heaven at the beginning of the Day of the

Lord, then we can be sure that the sixth Seal marks the point when the Bride, God's true Church, is taken up into heaven.

### **A Place Prepared...**

The Gospel of John records the promise that Jesus made to come back and take those who believe in him to his Father's house in heaven. This promise is fulfilled when the great multitude appears in heaven. The elder explains to John that they "*...are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.*" The King James translation simply says, "*He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*"

In the promise that Jesus made he said that his return would be for the purpose of taking believers to heaven so that they might live with Him and the Father in his Father's house. If the souls of dead believers were meant as the benefactors of this promise, then Jesus would have simply said "*When you die you will come to heaven to live with me in my Father's house.*" This is clearly not the case. Jesus connects "living" or "dwelling" with the Father in heaven to the rapture and His coming for His believers. Only after the rapture/resurrection will believers be *living* or *dwelling* in heaven with Jesus and the Father. Therefore the fact that the great multitude dwells with and serves God the Father in heaven is evidence that they are the Church that was raptured and resurrected prior to the Day of the Lord.

### **Salvation or Wrath?**

In the beginning portion of the book of Revelation John wrote down seven messages that Jesus wanted John to give to

seven churches in Asia Minor. They are messages to the actual first century churches of John's day, yet they can also be read as chronologically accurate descriptions of the Visible Church as a whole as it has grown and evolved over the centuries. These messages are also applicable to the problems and challenges faced by the many types of churches that exist today, and they contain many allusions to the situation that will confront the Visible Church as a whole just prior to the Day of the Lord.

Within these messages there are encouraging words for faithful believers and also accusations and warnings against false believers. The message that appears to be aimed at the Church that predominates today, at least here in the West, is the message to the seventh and final church:

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me

on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:14-22)

Throughout the messages Jesus is clear that faithful believers will be rewarded and false believers will be punished. To the church of Thyatira Jesus speaks of a woman named “Jezebel” who leads many of the believers astray with her false teachings. Jesus says that those who follow her wicked ways will be thrown “*with her into great tribulation*” (Revelation 2:22 NASB).

On the other hand, to faithful believers within the church in Philadelphia Jesus says,

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.” (Revelation 3:10)

A similar message is given to the church at Sardis, and the message contains many allusions to the themes that we have covered so far in our study of the rapture,

“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.

Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. **But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.** Yet you



have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, **dressed in white**, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will, like them, be **dressed in white**. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.” (Revelation 3:1-5)

The point of the messages from Jesus is clear: True believers who persevere, obey the commands of Jesus, and remain awake and focused on the hope of his return will be “*kept from the hour of trial*” and have the privilege of being “*dressed in white*,” while falsely professing believers will suffer the same fate as unbelievers and be “*cast into great tribulation*” and forced to endure the “*hour of trial*.”

The fate of true believers is declared by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, and it also implies the fate that can be expected for unbelievers as well as falsely professing believers,

“For God did not appoint us to suffer **wrath** but to receive **salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This statement can also be read as a prophecy that is fulfilled by the events of the sixth Seal:

**Salvation for true believers:** “After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count... And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘**Salvation** belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” (7:9-10)

**Wrath for everyone else:** “Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the

mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the **wrath** of the Lamb! **For the great day of their wrath has come**, and who can stand?’” (6:15-17)

## **Out of Great Tribulation**

After the great multitude appears in heaven one of the twenty-four elders approaches John and asks him who they are and where they came from. John is not sure and so he encourages the elder to tell him the answer. The elder responds saying,

“These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb...”  
(Revelation 7:14)

The term “great tribulation” is simply another name for the “Day of the Lord.” The adjective “great” is necessary to create a distinction between the end-times “great tribulation” and the “tribulation” that began for the Church the moment that it was formed in the first century AD. That the Church was promised “tribulation,” and has endured “tribulation” from the very beginning, is proven in a number of texts (all from the KJV):

Acts 14:22 – “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much **tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God.”

Romans 5:1-3 – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in **tribulations** also: knowing that **tribulation** worketh patience...”

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 – “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our **tribulation**, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

1 Thessalonians 3:4 – “For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer **tribulation**; even as it came to pass, and ye know.”

2 Thessalonians 1:4 – “So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and **tribulations** that ye endure.”

Revelation 1:9 – “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in **tribulation**, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Believers must understand that they will continually face “tribulation” for maintaining and proclaiming their faith. However, the Bible offers no evidence whatsoever that

believers must be prepared to enter into the end-times “great tribulation.” In fact, the opposite is true.

There are only three instances of the term “great tribulation” found in the Bible. Studied together these passages make it clear that the “great tribulation” applies to the entire Day of the Lord and that believers are promised to be kept from it.

The first passage is Matthew 24:15-21 (KJV),

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains... For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

Some prophecy scholars conclude that Jesus meant that the term “great tribulation” should be reserved to apply only to the *second half* of the seventieth week of Daniel. It is true that Jesus referred to this time period descriptively as a time of “great tribulation” but he immediately modified his description of that time to be the period of “greatest tribulation.” The entire Day of the Lord will be a period characterized by “great tribulation” but the second half of the seventieth week will be the time of “greatest tribulation.”

To summarize, the time of “tribulation” began with the creation of the Church in the first century; the time of “great tribulation” begins when the Day of the Lord begins after the sixth Seal is opened; and the time of “greatest tribulation” begins at the midpoint of the seventieth week when the abomination of desolation is set up in the Temple.

The second reference to “great tribulation” comes within the message to the church at Thyatira as a warning to professing believers,

“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into **great tribulation**, except they repent of their deeds.” (Revelation 2:20-22 KJV)

Now there are a few prophecy scholars who teach that the entire Church is destined to enter into the end-times “great tribulation” to suffer through it for at least a short period of time. But if this is the case, then the warning to the church at Thyatira makes absolutely no sense. Why would Jesus say “*repent, or I will cast you into great tribulation*” if believers are destined to enter into the “great tribulation” anyway? The passage above contradicts the theory that true believers will enter into the “great tribulation” and instead implies the very opposite.

The third reference to “great tribulation” comes within the explanation that John receives regarding the identity and origin of the “great multitude,”

“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of **great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:13-14 KJV)

The English translation of this text suggest to many scholars that the “great multitude” are a group of saints,

whether the living Church or the souls of end-times martyrs, who have endured a portion of the “great tribulation” prior to being taken out of it.

In fairness to this argument I must explain from the beginning that as a scholar I am a novice when it comes to Biblical Greek and so I stand to be corrected from those who are experts. However, because even the experts can be counted on to disagree, this is how I see it:

The “great multitude” of Revelation 7 can only be the raptured/resurrected Invisible Church of true and genuine believers. Believers are promised to be rescued from the Day of the Lord’s wrath, and the Day of the Lord begins within the sixth Seal, therefore the “great multitude” must be taken off of the earth before the Day of the Lord begins, and they cannot have experienced any of the effects of the “great tribulation.”

Here are several different translations of the text in question:

NIV - These are they who have come out of the great tribulation

KJV - These are they which came out of great tribulation

ASV - These are they that come of the great tribulation

NASB – These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation

There are two questions that must be answered. First, what is the proper tense in which the text should be translated, and second, what is the great multitude’s relationship to the great tribulation?

Regarding the first question, did the great multitude *come* out of the great tribulation (past tense) as recorded in the KJV and NIV? Or are they *coming* out of the great tribulation (present tense) as recorded in the ASV and NASB?

The problem revolves around the Greek word for

“came/come” in this passage which is *erxomenoi*. Strong’s Concordance explains that in Revelation 7:14 it is written in the present tense, but offers a qualification,

“5774 Tense - Present

The present tense represents a simple statement of fact or reality viewed as occurring in actual time. In most cases this corresponds directly with the English present tense. Some phrases which might be rendered as past tense in English will often occur in the present tense in Greek. These are termed ‘historical presents,’ and such occurrences dramatize the event described as if the reader were there watching the event occur. Some English translations render such historical presents in the English past tense, while others permit the tense to remain in the present.”

The word *erxomenoi* is an example of the “historical present” tense, which explains why some versions interpret it in the present tense and others in the past tense.

Further evidence that it should be rendered in the past tense comes from the previous verse (7:13) when the elder asked John “*whence came they?*” The question is in the aorist tense, which is almost always rendered in the past tense. John did not ask “*where are they coming from?*” but “*where did they come from?*”

Regarding Revelation 7:14, the highly respected Bible scholar Dr. Robert H. Mounce, in his exhaustive commentary and analysis The Book of Revelation (1977, p.173) writes,

“The participle should be understood in a general sense to mean ‘such as come’ or perhaps as a more vivid way of saying ‘**they that have just**

**come.’** The aorist [tense] of vs. 13 makes unlikely the idea that *oi erxomenoi* refers to some who are still arriving.”

We will allow Dr. Mounce to stand as our expert for our first question regarding the great multitude. The second question has to do with the “great tribulation.” Does the text demand that the great multitude experienced at least a portion of it, or did the great multitude escape its effects?

The question centers on the word for “out of” which is the Greek word *ek* from “*These are they which came **out of** great tribulation.*” According to Strong’s Concordance this little word is primarily interpreted as “out of,” “from,” “by,” or “away from,” when it is found in the New Testament. If we adopt the interpretation “away from” and link it with the good Dr. Mounce’s preferred interpretation for *erxomenoi* then 7:14 becomes,

*“These are they that have just come away from the great tribulation.”*

With the above interpretation it becomes much clearer how the great multitude is the group that has benefited from the promise found in Revelation 3:10 which is:

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also **keep you from** the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.”

The words “*keep from*” are from the Greek words *tereo ek*. Believers are promised to be “kept from” (*tereo ek*) the hour of trial, and after the great multitude appears in heaven it is clear that they are those who have “come away from” (*erxomenoi ek*) the great tribulation. They are those who



have been *rescued* at the last moment, who have *escaped* the Day of the Lord's wrath. They did not experience any of it, but were taken away from it right as it began.

The scholars who will probably object to this interpretation the most vigorously are those who accept the common "Pre-Tribulation Rapture" model that holds that the Day of the Lord begins with the first Seal (rather than within the sixth) and that the raptured Church is represented in heaven prior to the opening of the first Seal as the twenty-four elders.

Before advocates of this view begin drawing up their rebuttals to the interpretation of Revelation 7:14 given above, I suggest that they consider two texts, one from Paul and one from Jesus, and then explain how they can be applied to the twenty-four elders rather than the great multitude:

"According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. **And so we will be with the Lord forever.** (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to **stand before the Son of**

**Man.”** (Luke 21:34-36)

Paul explains that, according to the very words of Jesus, at the moment of the rapture and resurrection believers will be caught up into the air, and after that point **we will be with our Lord Jesus forever.**

According to the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, if believers are faithful, and watch and pray, and avoid the temptations of life, they will escape the Day of the Lord, and **stand before the Son of Man.**

Promoters of the traditional “Pre-Trib Rapture” model are forced to defend the conclusion that these texts have to be fulfilled by the twenty-four elders, their “Church,” which is first shown in Revelation 4:4,

“Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.”

If the twenty-four elders “represent” the raptured and resurrected Church in heaven, then why are they **sitting down** and not **standing before the Son of Man**? But more importantly, where is Jesus if the Church is to be “*with the Lord forever*” after the rapture?

After John first sees the twenty-four elders in Revelation 4:4 he watches as the seven-sealed scroll is produced. Then a search is made throughout the universe, in heaven, hell and on earth, for someone who is worthy to take the scroll, but no one is found. Finally in Revelation 5:6, after much weeping, Jesus steps forward after having given himself as a sacrifice. This is evidence that the beginning of John’s vision was first a journey back in time, to a time prior to the crucifixion, before he was shown what would happen in the future. Of course if this is the case then the twenty-four

elders can in no way “represent” the Church.

The situation is much different when it comes to the great multitude:

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, **standing** before the throne and **in front of the Lamb**. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” (Revelation 7:9-10)

There is the Church, and there is our Savior, in perfect fulfillment of the words of Jesus and Paul.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has offered evidence that the rapture and resurrection of the Church should be placed right after the opening of the sixth Seal, prior to the beginning of the Day of the Lord that begins with the sixth Seal’s fifth event, which is the shaking of the earth.

The Church is then pictured in heaven as the diverse “great multitude” in the description given in Revelation 7:9-17, as well as in the description at the end of the great tribulation found in Revelation 19:1-9.



# Chapter Eight:

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## The Two Witnesses Identified

**T**he eleventh chapter of the book of Revelation describes the career of the two most powerful saints of the end times, who will appear in Jerusalem in the land of Israel and be empowered by God to speak out against the Antichrist. There has been much speculation over the years as to the identity of these two powerful men of God.

The nature of the plagues that they will cause, done to command the world's attention, is seen by many as connecting them with the Old Testament saints Moses and Elijah.

“These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.” (Revelation 11:6)

The plague allowing no rain is similar to the drought that the prophet Elijah caused during the reign of King Ahab (1 Kings 17:1), and the plague turning the waters into blood is similar to the plague Moses caused upon Egypt prior to the Exodus (Exodus 7:17-20). The prophet Malachi also predicted that Elijah would appear in Israel prior to the Day of

the Lord (Malachi 4:5) and for these reasons many scholars theorize that Moses and Elijah will be the Two Witnesses described in Revelation.

Other scholars point to a passage in the book of Hebrews that states that every man is destined to die once, and after that to face the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). It is reasoned that Elijah and Enoch must then be the Two Witnesses, because these two men did not die, but were raptured up to heaven by God while they were yet alive (Genesis 5:24, 2 Kings 2:11). It is believed that their pre-destined deaths would then come during their ministry as the Two Witnesses.

This is another interesting conjecture, but it ignores the fact that there will be many people at the end of the age who will never experience a physical death. These are the believers who will be raptured to heaven prior to the Day of the Lord. They will never taste of death and so there will be people to whom the statement found in Hebrews does not apply.

On the other hand there have been a number of people throughout history, such as Lazarus, who have died a *second* time after being resurrected through a miracle from God. The passage in Hebrews was not offering evidence that everyone must die *only* once, but was instead emphasizing the fact that everyone will face *judgment* after death (contradicting the doctrine of reincarnation). As such, it does not offer conclusive proof that Elijah and Enoch must reappear to die on the earth as the Two Witnesses of Revelation.

If not Elijah, Enoch or Moses, then who might the Two Witnesses of Revelation be, and can a conclusion be reached that is based on solid evidence, rather than on speculation or conjecture?

This book looks at the end-times events from a unique perspective and offers one of the first comprehensive prophetic models that clearly shows exactly *how* and *when* within Revelation the great and terrible Day of the Lord will begin. A prediction found at the end of the book of Haggai

is one of the passages that confirms the chronology put forth in this book,

“And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Haggai 2:20-23 KJV)

Haggai predicted that God would take Zerubbabel and make him “*as a signet*” after the earth has experienced the following events:

1. The shaking of the heavens and the earth.
2. The overthrow of the “*throne of kingdoms*.”
3. The destruction of the strength of the heathen nations.
4. The destruction of a great army from internal fighting.

These are all events that our chronology shows will occur at the beginning of the Day of the Lord, starting with the shaking of the heavens and the earth after the opening of the sixth Seal.

The overthrow of the “*throne of kingdoms*” is, I believe, a reference to end-times Babylon, the great city that “*rules over the kings of the earth*” (Revelation 17:18). She will be “*consumed by fire*” in one hour, perhaps as a result of the

first Trumpet judgment, which will also cause the destruction of the “*strength of the heathen nations*” of the Magog alliance.

The invading army of the Magog alliance itself will also be struck with the effects of the first Trumpet, but before they are faced with destruction from the sky the armies will be struck with madness and internal fighting, perhaps because of the chaos caused by the shaking of the earth. Ezekiel 38:21-22 records,

“I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign LORD. **Every man’s sword will be against his brother.** I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him.”

Haggai predicts the same thing when he says,

“I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, **every one by the sword of his brother.**”

Haggai then explains that after these events have taken place the Lord will choose Zerubbabel to be His “*signet*,” or official representative on the earth—a role he will fulfill as one of the Two Witnesses.

“In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Zerubbabel will have a major part to play during the first



half of the seventieth week of Daniel. This will be the time during which the Jews will rebuild the Temple, which makes sense, because Zerubbabel, along with his partner Joshua, had a major part to play when the Temple was rebuilt following the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity almost 2500 years ago. We will now look at the historical roles of Zerubbabel and Joshua before examining their future roles.

### **Joshua and Zerubbabel and the Rebuilding of Solomon's Temple**

In 538 BC the Persian King Cyrus issued the decree allowing for a large number of the Jewish exiles to leave Babylon and return to Israel to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Two years later, in 536 BC, the Jews succeeded in setting the foundation of the Temple and then they began to build the Temple itself. As the work began many of Israel's enemies became worried and tried to discourage the builders. Eventually their harassment succeeded, and the work on the Temple stopped for more than a decade until the second year of King Darius of Persia.

This was when the prophets Haggai and Zechariah stepped up to encourage the Jews who were living in Jerusalem to turn back to their task of rebuilding the Temple. The two chapters of the book of Haggai document how he at first scolded the Jews for building comfortable homes for themselves, while God's house remained unfinished. Then he focused his attention on Zerubbabel, who was the political leader and governor of Judah, and also on Joshua, who was the religious leader and high priest. These two men listened to Haggai and led the Jews to finally finish their job of rebuilding the Temple in the sixth year of Darius. Zerubbabel and Joshua were two men who were very impor-

tant to God, and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah had much to say about them.

The word of the Lord first came to Haggai on the first day of the **sixth** month of the second year of King Darius, and it was this message that prompted Zerubbabel and Joshua to lead the people to return to the work on God's Temple, which then began three days later on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

Then the word of the Lord again came to Haggai, this time on the twenty-first day of the **seventh** month of the same year. As the Temple was being built many of the Jews became discouraged and ashamed, because they could see that the Temple they were building would hardly compare to the glory of Solomon's Temple that had been destroyed by the Babylonians many years earlier. Haggai consoled them by telling them that the "*desired of all nations*" would come and "*fill this house with glory*," making the glory of the Second Temple "*greater than the glory of the former house*" (Haggai 2:6-9). This was a prediction that the Messiah would one day enter the Second Temple, which is exactly what Jesus did on many occasions.

In the **eighth** month of the second year of Darius the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, who told the people of Israel that they must never turn their back on God as their forefathers had. Zechariah's word was heeded as the Temple was being worked on, and the people repented and acknowledged that God always dealt with them justly (Zechariah 1:1-6).

The word of the Lord came again to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the **ninth** month, of the second year of King Darius, this time with a message to Israel that they should carefully follow the Lord's laws, and thus receive His blessings. And finally, the Lord gave His last message to Haggai, His second message on the same day of the twenty-fourth, which was the message that Zerubbabel would be

taken by God and set up as God's signet after the destructive beginning of the Day of the Lord at the end of the age.

On the twenty-fourth day of the **eleventh** month of Darius' second year, God spoke again to Zechariah and gave him a lengthy vision of the future. This vision was given to Israel as it existed in Zechariah's day, but it also included predictions that can only apply to the end-times.

Zechariah was first shown a man riding a red horse, with many other horses behind him, and they are explained as the ones that the Lord has sent throughout the earth. They report to the angel that the world is at rest and in peace, and then the angel asks the Lord how long until Israel will again be blessed, bringing an end to the seventy years of God's anger. The Lord responds by saying that the Temple will be rebuilt and Jerusalem will again be prosperous and receive God's blessings (Zechariah 1:7-17).

Next, Zechariah is shown four horns that are explained as the horns that are responsible for scattering the Jews. Four craftsmen, or carpenters, then appear, and God says that their work will counter the work of the horns and the Jews will again be secure (Zechariah 1:18-21).

Zechariah's vision recorded in chapter two then focuses on events that concern the end of the age. First, Zechariah is shown a man with a measuring line, who is sent out to measure Jerusalem. An angel predicts that Jerusalem will be without walls, and the Lord says that He will protect her and be its glory within. Then the Lord gives two commands, the first is to flee from the land of the north, and from where they had been scattered to the four winds of heaven, and the second is to flee from the Daughter of Babylon. God then predicts that He will raise His hand against the many nations that have plundered Israel, and that through this act Israel will know their God. The Lord will then dwell in Israel and live among His people, choosing Jerusalem and inheriting Israel and many other nations as well. Zechariah 2 ends with

a command that is also a warning, *“Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.”*

All of these predictions offer allusions to the book of Revelation and to the Day of the Lord:

—The measuring of Jerusalem is similar to the measuring of the Temple in the eleventh chapter of Revelation. It symbolizes God’s choosing of Jerusalem once again, and a return to Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, during which God again focuses on the Jews and Jerusalem for the seventieth and final week.

—The prediction that Jerusalem will be prosperous and without walls is similar to Ezekiel’s prophecy that Israel will be a prosperous land without walls prior to the Magog invasion.

—Zechariah writes that Israel will be scattered to the four winds of heaven, which explains the end-times gathering of Israel *“from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”* (Matthew 24:31) that Jesus predicted within his Olivet Discourse.

—The command to flee and escape from the Daughter of Babylon can only be a reference to end-times Babylon, because there was no danger in ancient Babylon from which the Jews were commanded to flee. Jews lived in ancient Babylon safely and continuously even after they were allowed to return to Israel, and they helped to build a flourishing and long-lasting Jewish community. The command to flee from the Daughter of Babylon corresponds to the message in Revelation to those living in end-times Babylon, *“Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.”* God’s people are warned to flee because Babylon will suffer a very serious divine judgment and He does not want them to be a part of it.

—The hand that God will raise against the nations that plunder Israel, that causes Israel to recognize their God, is also similar to the prophecies of Ezekiel regarding the Magog invasion at the beginning of the tribulation. Ezekiel writes that Magog invades for plunder, and that when God destroys them Israel “*will know that I am the Lord their God.*”

—The final result, when the Lord lives in Jerusalem among Israel and many other nations, is another clear prophecy of the final result of the Day of the Lord, when an era of peace and brotherhood will be established throughout the world for a thousand years.

### **Joshua before the Judgment Seat of Christ**

The third chapter of Zechariah continues with his end-times theme and it focuses on Joshua the high priest, standing before the Lord at the time of his resurrection and judgment. This is the judgment that every believer will have to face, known theologically as the *bema* seat of Christ, which is a Greek word for “*judgment.*” The Apostle Paul used the term *bema seat*, because in his day the *bema seat* was understood as the place where athletes were rewarded after completing a race.

The judgment of the *bema seat* is not a judgment of condemnation, because every believer is assured of salvation. It is rather a judgment that focuses on the life of the individual, separating the good works from the bad and making the true worth of each person’s life completely obvious.

This judgment is mentioned several times by the Apostle Paul,

“You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written:

‘As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’ So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:10-12)

“For we must all appear before the judgment [bema] seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

This judgment will be one where the believer’s bad works are burned up with fire and completely consumed, leaving only the good works behind. Paul explains,

“[Every man’s] work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.” (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

This judgment will occur at the resurrection and rapture at the time of the end. Paul writes that the good works of a believer’s life will be rewarded, and this reward is described in many passages as a crown,

—“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” (James 1:12)

—“...the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes...” (1 Thessalonians 2:19)

- “Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:8)
- “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.” (1 Peter 5:4)

Believers will be judged when they are resurrected or raptured, which will be at the beginning of the Day of the Lord for most, and at the resurrection of Revelation 20:4 for those who die *during* the Day of the Lord. At the time of the rapture and resurrection there will also be a changing of the body, allegorized by Paul as a change of clothing,

“For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ ‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:52-57)

All of these descriptions that relate to the resurrection and judgment of believers are shown in the third chapter of Zechariah, which gives us a picture of Joshua the high priest, who will be raised near the beginning of the Day of the Lord after the rapture of living believers, to carry out a specific mission upon the earth,

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.

And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.” (Zechariah 3 KJV)

This vision begins at a time when “*the Lord hath chosen Jerusalem.*” Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks was



given specifically concerning the Jews and Jerusalem, and this statement marks the beginning of the *seventieth* of Daniel's seventy weeks, ending the gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks which has lasted almost 2000 years. The beginning of the seventieth week is also the beginning of the 1260-day ministry of the Two Witnesses of Revelation.

Zechariah is shown a scene in heaven during which Satan and the "*angel of the Lord*" stand beside Joshua. Satan is rebuked, and Joshua is referred to as a "*brand plucked out of the fire*." Paul wrote that every believer will come through the judgment after the resurrection "*as one escaping through the flames*."

Then Joshua is given new clothes, just as Paul wrote that "*the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality*."

When Joshua's filthy old clothes are replaced with perfect new clothes the "*angel of the Lord*" says "*Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee*." This "*angel*" is none other than Jesus Christ, because no angel has the authority to forgive sins.

After Joshua's clothes are replaced he is then given a mitre, which can be seen as a type of crown, perhaps signifying his reward for being faithful and passing through the judgment.

After Joshua is resurrected and judged then Jesus gives Joshua a task, commanding him to "*keep my charge*." Joshua is told that if he is successful then God will give him the authority to "*judge my house*" and to "*keep my courts*," and he will also be given a place among "*these that stand by*." Jesus was referring to the great multitude of raptured saints that will be standing in heaven before God's throne after the rapture and resurrection, as seen in Revelation after the opening of the sixth Seal. If Joshua keeps the "*charge*" that he is given then he will be given a place with the great multitude.

Then a reference is made to Joshua's "*fellows*" who "*sit before thee,*" which refers to the twenty-four elders who sit on thrones in heaven surrounding the throne of God. They are indeed men that are "*wondered at,*" and they are also Joshua's "*fellows*" because they are a select group of Old Testament saints who minister in heaven today.

A reference is then made to the Messiah Jesus Christ, who is the Branch and the stone with seven eyes, as also described in Revelation 5:6. The Messiah is a stone that was laid before Joshua's end-times mission, but the Second Coming when the Messiah is brought forth will come after Joshua's mission. Finally chapter three ends with a reference to the Messianic Kingdom when Israel's sins will be forgiven and the earth will be at peace.

## A Charge to Keep

The nature of Joshua's mission, which is the "*charge*" that he is asked to keep, is explained further in chapter four of the book of Zechariah, which returns again to Zerubbabel, Joshua's partner.

"And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, And behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and

said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” (Zechariah 4, KJV)

When Zechariah received this vision the work on the Temple had been restarted and had been going on for four or five months. Zechariah was told that Zerubbabel’s hands would finish the rebuilding of the Temple, and that this would be a sign to Zechariah that his vision was true.

When Zechariah first saw the two olive trees and the two

golden pipes he asked what they were. At first he was given a message to give to Zerubbabel, saying that Zerubbabel would have the power to bring down mountains. Then he was told that Zerubbabel would possess the seven eyes of the Lord, which were also associated with Joshua earlier in Zechariah's vision. Finally he is given the answer for what the olive trees represent when the Lord tells him:

***“These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”***

Joshua and Zerubbabel will be God's anointed ones. God's choice of Zerubbabel as a “signet” during the end-times is shown in the last prophecy of Haggai, and Joshua's resurrection at the time of end, with the “charge” that he is given after his resurrection, is shown in Zechariah chapter three.

However, the mission of Joshua and Zerubbabel, the two olive trees who will rise up after the rapture at the beginning of the seventieth week, is not fully explained until the eleventh chapter of the book of Revelation,

***“And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth...”***

When their task is completed they will be killed by the Antichrist, but three and a half days later they will again be resurrected, this time up off of the streets of Jerusalem. They will then be taken into heaven to take their places among the great multitude of saints who stand before the throne of God, serving and worshiping the Creator of the universe.

## Conclusion

The identification of the Two Witnesses of Revelation as Joshua and Zerubbabel of the Old Testament helps to confirm the chronology of prophetic events developed in this book in a number of ways.

Firstly, Haggai's prophecy of the choosing of Zerubbabel as God's "signet" gives evidence that our sequence of events at the beginning of the Day of the Lord involving a shaking of the earth and the Magog invasion of Israel is correct.

Secondly, the resurrection of Joshua and his experience of the judgment seat of Christ at a point when God "*hath chosen Jerusalem*" supports the conclusion that the ministry of the Two Witnesses begins at the same time as the seventieth week of Daniel.

Thirdly, Joshua's resurrection happens within a heavenly scene that matches the scene in Revelation, with groups of saints "standing" and "sitting." If the "standing" group is indeed the raptured Church, then this is evidence that the rapture does precede both the seventieth week and the ministry of the Two Witnesses.

The identification of Joshua and Zerubbabel as the Two Witnesses of Revelation helps to confirm the prophetic chronology developed in this book, and by the same token our prophetic chronology helps to confirm the identification of Joshua and Zerubbabel as the Two Witnesses. They are mutually reinforcing interpretations that do not make sense in any other context or within any other hypothetical chronology of events.



# Chapter Nine:

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## The Four Horsemen

**T**he Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are perhaps the most well-known but least understood symbols of the book of Revelation. They are introduced with the opening of the first four Seals of the seven-sealed scroll and their appearance announces the beginning of the process of transferring control and ownership of the earth away from Satan and into the hands of Jesus Christ.

To properly understand the meaning of the Four Horsemen it is important to know when they appear chronologically in their relation to the seventieth week of Daniel. Many scholars make the mistake of placing the beginning of the seventieth week prior to, or at the same time as, the opening of the first Seal, which means that the Four Horsemen are interpreted to apply to specific events *during* the first half of the seventieth week. Contrary to this approach, in our chronology we have placed the beginning of the seventieth week after the first *Trumpet*, so the Four Horsemen must be interpreted to apply to events that occur *prior to* the seventieth week and prior to the Day of the Lord.

This interpretation becomes quite natural when we take a look at what Jesus described as the “birth pangs” of the time of the end, and compare them with the Four Horsemen

of the Apocalypse. These birthpangs are described in the all-important Olivet Discourse that Jesus gave on a day just prior to his crucifixion,

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. **All these are the beginning of sorrows.**

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains...” (Matthew 24:4-16 KJV)

The Greek word translated in this passage as “sorrows” is the word *odin*, which refers specifically to the “pangs” or “pains” of a woman giving birth. The NIV translates the passage as “*All these are the beginning of **birth pains**.*” The



Apostle Paul, as is his custom, again refers back to Jesus when he uses the same Greek word in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, “*While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as **labor pains** on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.*” Jesus predicts the *beginning* of birthpangs, and Paul refers to the sudden destruction of the Day of the Lord as the onset of the actual labor.

The signs that Jesus describes in Matthew 24:4-9 leading up to the abomination of desolation can be put into three categories:

1. Signs that **do not** apply to the end-times.
2. Signs that predict the approach of the end-times (the beginning of “birthpangs”)
3. The sign that is a part of the end-times.

The two signs that do not apply to the end-times are (1) the appearance of many false Christs (plural) and (2) scattered wars and rumors of wars.

The four signs that should be understood as the beginning of “birthpangs” are the signs of (1) a major global conflict, (2) famines, (3) pestilences and (4) earthquakes in diverse places.

The sign that is a part of the end-times is the *global* persecution and hatred of those who believe in Jesus.

The preliminary signs relate directly to the appearance of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, while the sign of a global persecution of believers is again *predicted* within the fifth Seal:

“I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, ‘Come!’ I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he

rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, 'Come!' Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, 'Come!' I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, 'A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!'

When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, 'Come!' I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?' Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed." (Revelation 6:1-11)

## The First Birthpang of the Apocalypse

The first Seal brings forth the conqueror on the white horse who holds a bow and receives a crown. Most scholars believe that this refers to the Antichrist, but I do not believe that this is the case. However, the rider is certainly a false Christ, and in this respect he parallels the warning of Jesus who said, *“Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”*

The main difference between the first Seal and the words of Jesus, however, is that Jesus referred to false *Christs* (plural) that would *not* indicate the end-times, whereas the first Seal focuses on a single figure who must certainly be viewed as indicative of the approach of the end.

In any case, Jesus did not tell us to watch for a *figure*, but rather to watch for an *event* that would be the first “birthpang” of the time of the end. That event is a major global conflict that Jesus described saying, *“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...”* This event parallels the second Seal that introduces the rider on the red horse who is given a large sword and *“power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other.”*

When Jesus mentioned this sign he was describing something that is very well known within Judaism. In an ancient Jewish commentary, the *Bereshit Rabbah*, section XLII:4, it is stated, *“If you shall see kingdoms rising against each other in turn, then give heed and note the footsteps of the Messiah.”*

In another Jewish commentary, the *Zohar Chadash*, it is written, *“At that time wars shall be stirred up in the world. Nation shall rise against nation and city against city; much distress shall be renewed **against the enemies of the Israelites.**”*

These are both non-canonical Jewish sources that draw

from an oral tradition, but combined with the words of Jesus they are enough to show that both Jews and Christians should understand that a massive World War is a sign of the approaching end-times.

If we were to look back in history and try to identify a conflict that might possibly fulfill these predictions we need look no further than the Second World War. It encompassed eastern and western Europe as well as a significant part of Asia and Polynesia and parts of Africa, and it was fought throughout the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. It was also fought, as the Jewish source the *Zohar Chadesh* appears to have predicted, against the “*enemies of the Israelites*,” who were the German Nazi’s who exterminated up to six million Jews.

World War II ended with the use of atomic energy, a terrible power never used in warfare before or since, and it dwarfed World War I, which was fought mainly in Europe and the Middle East, which was more comparable in size to the Napoleonic Wars than to World War II. Truly the Second World War stands out as the most significant global conflict of the past two millennia, and it had a huge impact on the global Jewish community, leading to the creation of the modern nation of Israel.

When Jesus predicted a worldwide conflict as the first birthpang of the end-times it is very likely that he was referring directly to World War II. With this understanding for the second Seal in mind, then the identity of the rider of the first Seal becomes more obvious.

Most Bible scholars believe that the first Seal marks the beginning of the seventieth week, and that therefore the rider of the first Seal must represent the Antichrist. Chronologically we have determined that this cannot be the case because on our timeline the seventieth week does not begin until after the first Trumpet of Revelation. With this interpretation eliminated, identifying the rider of the white horse

first requires an understanding of Satan's agenda throughout history.

## **Satan's Seven Kings**

Satan is pictured in Revelation 12:3 as "*an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.*" These seven heads are then shown as belonging to the Beast in Revelation 13:1,

"And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name."

In Revelation 17 this Beast is shown under the domination of end-times Babylon, which is represented as a "*Great Prostitute.*" The seven heads of the Beast are then explained as representative of seven kings:

"This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction." (Revelation 17:9-11)

The seven heads of Satan that are also shown as seven heads of the Beast are explained as being seven kings. They are seven *Satanic* kings that have ruled on the earth during different periods in history, and they have all been enemies of God, each possessing "*a blasphemous name.*"

When John received his vision of the end-times that has

come down to us as the book of Revelation he was told that five of these kings had already died, that one was presently ruling, and that the seventh was yet to come, who would remain only “*for a little while.*” The seventh king would then be followed by the Antichrist himself, who would be the eighth, but also one of the seven.

This aspect of Bible prophecy demands virtually a book-length study of its own, but I will summarize briefly what I have been led to believe. The first five kings can be identified as:

1. Nimrod.
2. Pharaoh of Egypt who perished in the Red Sea during the Exodus.
3. The king of Tyre who is described in Ezekiel 28, a description that seamlessly transitions into a description of Satan himself in verses 12-19. This transition occurs simply because the king of Tyre was possessed by Satan.
4. King Sennacherib of Assyria who conquered Babylon. He is described in Isaiah 14 as the king of Babylon, and there is another seamless transition into a description of Satan in verses 12-14.
5. Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He is described in Daniel 8:9-14, 8:23-26 and 11:21-45. As with the previous two kings, the descriptions of Antiochus transition into descriptions that could not apply to a mere man. In the case of Antiochus they transition into descriptions of the Antichrist himself (11:36-45).

These five kings make up the five Satanic kings that had already died when John received his vision.

The sixth king that was ruling when John received the vision of Revelation was most likely Nero Caesar. This would demand an early date for the writing of the book of Revelation, but there is compelling evidence for just such

a date [1]:

- The Church Father Clement of Alexandria asserted that all revelation ceased under Nero’s reign.
- The Muratorian canon (ca. 170 AD) has John completing Revelation before Paul had written to seven different churches (Paul finished these writings in 67-68 AD).
- The Church Father Tertullian placed John’s banishment to Patmos at the same time as Peter and Paul’s martyrdom (67-68 AD).
- The Church Father Epiphanius (315-403 AD) twice stated that Revelation was written under Nero.
- The Syriac version of Revelation (6<sup>th</sup> century AD) begins with the heading, “*written in Patmos, whither John was sent by Nero Caesar.*”
- The Byzantine scholar Arethas, from the 9<sup>th</sup> century wrote, “*When the Evangelist received these oracles, the destruction in which the Jews were involved was not yet inflicted by the Romans [70 AD].*”

Nero was a merciless persecutor of Christians and by the end of his life he exhibited erratic personality traits that pointed towards insanity or, perhaps, Satanic possession. He is a likely candidate for being the sixth of Satan’s seven kings, the one who lived at the time John received the vision of Revelation.

The seventh king, who would precede the Antichrist and “*remain for a little while,*” must certainly be Adolf Hitler. He is the same king that is introduced at the opening of the first Seal who “*rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.*”

It cannot be argued that Adolf Hitler took power in

Germany with a boldly aggressive foreign policy agenda. In other words, he took power for the purpose of **conquest**. Other facts about Hitler that in hindsight cannot be argued are the facts that he was steeped in the occult and probably possessed by Satan, that he hated genuine Christianity, and that he also passionately hated God's unique people, the Jews, and worked for their complete eradication. A final fact that reinforces our identification of Hitler as Satan's seventh king, is the fact that his career was, thankfully, rather brief. He ruled only "*for a little while.*"

Jesus specifically spoke of a great world war as the first birthpang of the Apocalypse, and indeed this was the first sign that became visible on earth. It corresponds with the *second* Seal of Revelation.

The appearance of Hitler, Satan's seventh king, preceded World War II, just as the first Seal precedes the second Seal, but Jesus did not mention Hitler as the first sign because Hitler's evil agenda and influence only became known to the world *after* World War II had begun.

In heaven the birthpangs of the Apocalypse began with the appearance of Hitler—the first Seal, but on earth the birthpangs became noticeable only with World War II—the second Seal.

## **Famines, Pestilence and Death**

The second "birthpang" of the end-times that Jesus referred to was the sign of "famines." This is paralleled by the third Seal that brings forth a rider on a black horse holding a pair of scales, after which a voice cries out saying,

"A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!" (Revelation 6:6)



The third “birthpang” that Jesus referred to was that of “pestilences.” This is paralleled by the fourth Seal that brings forth a rider on a pale horse:

“Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were *given power* over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.” (Revelation 6:8)

The second and third birthpangs, those of famines and pestilences, described in Revelation as the third and fourth Seals, are also signs that could easily be already fulfilled.

Today’s global economic order (maintained by an Anglo-American financier elite centered in New York and London) brutalizes the Third World and keeps it continuously indebted and in a pre-industrial state. While a vast portion of the Third World remains in poverty and hunger the developed nations continue their plundering, while their economic engines are fueled by the foundational resource of oil (“*do not damage the oil...*”), and their people focus on being entertained and inebriated (“*...and the wine!*”).

In this age of technological advancement and comfort for the West the entire continent of Africa has suffered a drop in its basic standard of living over the past thirty years. Perhaps this lack of fairness is signified by the scales held by the rider of the black horse. Scales are a *universal symbol for justice*, and perhaps the third Seal is pointing out the terrible **injustice** promoted by the established economic order and maintained by the world’s most powerful political forces.

Regarding the fourth Seal, it should be noted that it does not predict the death of one-fourth of the world’s population, but rather that the *power* the fourth Horseman possesses will be *effective* over one-fourth of the earth. Compare the fourth

Seal to the sixth Trumpet: the fourth Seal speaks of a fraction of the world's territory, whereas the sixth Trumpet speaks of a fraction of the world's population.

The fourth of the earth under the *power* of the fourth horseman may refer to the poorest quarter of the earth including areas such as Africa and Southeast Asia. Certainly the people in these areas are much more acquainted with death in the form of war, famine, plague and wild animals, than the rest of the earth. The terrible AIDS epidemic throughout Africa may be another result of the rider of the pale horse exercising his power.

The fourth birthpang, that of "*earthquakes in divers places*," is not mentioned in Revelation, but as prophecy scholar Hal Lindsey has shown, there has been a major rise in earthquakes over the past sixty years or so [2]:

- From 1940 to 1950 there were only 4 major quakes recorded in the world (6.0 or greater).
- From 1950 to 1960 there were 9.
- From 1960 to 1970 there were 13.
- From 1970 to 1979 there were 51.
- From 1980 to 1989 there were 86.
- From just 1990 to 1993 there were over 100 quakes that measured 6.0 or greater.

Scientists have been able to track these huge quakes worldwide since the late 1800s, and so this is not simply an indication that science has advanced in its ability to find earthquakes. It is in fact the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction of a rise in earthquakes worldwide leading up to the end-times.

Three of the four birthpangs described by Jesus are paralleled in the second, third and fourth Seals of Revelation, and all of these can be viewed as having been fulfilled. The fourth birthpang is easily demonstrated by scientific records

and can also be viewed as having been fulfilled. Jesus referred to these signs saying, “*All these are the beginning of birth pains.*”

## **Persecuted, Killed and Hated**

The last sign from our passage from the Olivet Discourse, a sign that the end has come, is the sign of world-wide Christian persecution. Jesus said,

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.” (Matthew 24:9)

This global persecution of believers will occur after the rapture and after the Day of the Lord has begun. It is predicted within the fifth Seal when the martyrs are told that the final judgment must wait “*until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.*”

This prediction is fulfilled during the Day of the Lord and those who die during this time will be resurrected after the Second Coming as shown in Revelation 20:4,

“And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Note again that the fifth Seal does not *describe* a world-wide persecution of believers, it merely *predicts* a world-

wide persecution of believers. This *prediction* of future martyrs compares with that found in Matthew 24:9, which comes after the birthpangs have been fulfilled.

The persecution of believers is one of the main characteristics of the end-times period. After the Day of the Lord begins, and after all believers have been raptured, those new believers who turn to Christ can expect to be hated for their faith and hunted down and killed throughout the entire world. Revelation 14:13 offers a word of encouragement for believers who will face this persecution,

“Then I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.’”

## Conclusion

In this chapter we have shown that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse signify events that lead up to the actual beginning of the Day of the Lord.

The first Seal, instead of being viewed as bringing forth the eighth king, the Antichrist (Revelation 17:11), is better understood as bringing forth the seventh king, Adolf Hitler, who “*rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest*” but remained only “*for a little while*” before suffering a suicidal fate typical of many of Satan’s kings.

The second Seal is a description of the greatest global conflict that the world has ever seen, which was World War II.

The third Seal is indicative of famine and of an unfair global economic order. Oil, wine and cheap labor all relate in some way to this unfair system.

The fourth Seal indicates the degeneration in the safety

and welfare of the poorest quarter of the earth and this area's susceptibility to death in the form of violence, famine, plague and wild animals.

The Four Horsemen that are brought forth with the breaking of the first four Seals have already made their impact upon the global stage and the birthpangs of the Apocalypse have already been felt. The next chapter will examine one last event that might possibly be the final prelude to the Apocalypse.

### **Notes**

1. *The Dating of Revelation*, Jack Van Deventer, <http://www.credenda.org/issues/9-3eschaton.php>
2. Planet Earth 2000 AD, Hal Lindsey, 1996, pp.85-86



# Chapter Ten:

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## Prelude to the Apocalypse

**T**he Day of the Lord will begin when God is forced to act to protect Israel from certain destruction that will come in the form of an overwhelming and unexpected invasion. The situation in Israel prior to this invasion is described by the prophet Ezekiel,

“In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety... You will say, ‘I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars.’” (Ezekiel 38:8-11)

Today it can hardly be said that Israel lives in safety, or that she exists as a peaceful or unsuspecting nation. Israel is continually threatened by terrorists and suicide bombers from the Palestinian areas, and by attacks from Hezbollah forces in Lebanon. At the same time she is threatened by the buildup of chemical and biological weapons in Syria, and by

the possible emergence of nuclear weapons in Iran.

To protect herself, both from Lebanon and from the Palestinian areas, the Israeli government has built fences on her northern border, fences along the green line that separates the Palestinian areas from Israel proper, and fences around the Jewish settlements within Palestinian areas. There are few “*unwalled villages*” in Israel, and walls, gates and bars are still a necessity. Today Israel displays a justifiable paranoia that Ezekiel says will be absent prior to the Magog alliance invasion.

Another characteristic of the Magog invasion that is worth mentioning is that the alliance includes none of Israel’s closest neighbors which have traditionally been Israel’s most stubborn enemies. Neither Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon or the Palestinians are included in the invasion that brings forth the Day of the Lord.

The absence of these nations, as well as the peace and safety that Israel enjoys prior to the invasion, may in fact be explained at the very beginning when Ezekiel says, “*In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war...*”

Perhaps what we need to look for is a war between Israel and her closest neighbors that will set the stage for the “*peaceful and unsuspecting*” situation in Israel prior to the Magog invasion. To pursue this possibility we will first examine a prophecy given in the form of a psalm by Asaph, King David’s chief songwriter.

## The Conspiracy Against Israel

“O God, do not keep silent; be not quiet, O God, be not still. See how your enemies are astir, how your foes rear their heads. With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish. ‘Come,’ they say, ‘let us destroy them



as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more.’ With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you—the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites, Gebal, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre. Even Assyria has joined them to lend strength to the descendants of Lot. Selah

Do to them as you did to Midian, as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, who perished at Endor and became like refuse on the ground. Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, who said, ‘Let us take possession of the pasturelands of God.’

Make them like tumbleweed, O my God, like chaff before the wind. As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze, so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm. Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O LORD. May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace. Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.” (Psalm 83)

In this psalm Asaph describes a great conspiracy to destroy Israel. The tribes and cities that he mentions correspond to the modern-day Palestinians and to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, and their plan is to “*take possession of the pasturelands of God.*”

What is important is the plea that the psalmist makes to God. He asks God to put an end to this conspiracy, to destroy the members of the conspiracy and to “***make them like tumbleweed, O my God, like chaff before the wind.***” God has never answered this plea, at least not yet, and the conspiracy, by these very nations, to destroy Israel and take

over the land still exists to this day.

The psalmist's plea is finally answered within a prophecy given to Isaiah:

“An oracle concerning Damascus: ‘See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. The cities of Aroer will be deserted and left to flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid. The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and royal power from Damascus; the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the Israelites,’ declares the LORD Almighty. ‘In that day the glory of Jacob will fade; the fat of his body will waste away. It will be as when a reaper gathers the standing grain and harvests the grain with his arm—as when a man gleanes heads of grain in the Valley of Rephaim. Yet some gleanings will remain, as when an olive tree is beaten, leaving two or three olives on the topmost branches, four or five on the fruitful boughs,’ declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

In that day men will look to their Maker and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel. They will not look to the altars, the work of their hands, and they will have no regard for the Asherah poles and the incense altars their fingers have made. In that day their strong cities, which they left because of the Israelites, will be like places abandoned to thickets and undergrowth. And all will be desolation.

You have forgotten God your Savior; you have not remembered the Rock, your fortress. Therefore, though you set out the finest plants and plant imported vines, though on the day you set them out, you make them grow, and on the morning when you plant them, you bring them to bud,

yet the harvest will be as nothing in the day of disease and incurable pain.

Oh, the raging of many nations—they rage like the raging sea! Oh, the uproar of the peoples—they roar like the roaring of great waters! Although the peoples roar like the roar of surging waters, when he rebukes them **they flee far away, driven before the wind like chaff on the hills, like tumbleweed before a gale.** In the evening, sudden terror! Before the morning, they are gone! This is the portion of those who loot us, the lot of those who plunder us.” (Isaiah 17)

The names may be different, but the places referred to in Isaiah 17 are the same as those in Psalm 83. Isaiah describes a major conflict, and the main protagonists are Israel and Syria. The most obvious result of this conflict is the destruction of Damascus. It is the world’s oldest continuously inhabited city, and it has never suffered the devastation predicted by Isaiah. Damascus will be destroyed and left as a heap of ruins. The other results of this conflict are as follows,

- The cities of Aroer will be deserted. According to different sources, Aroer is the name of three places in or near Palestine, or it refers to the modern town of Arair, east of the Dead Sea in Jordan.
- The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim. The ancient tribe of Ephraim was given the land that is now in the central part of the Palestinian West Bank. These cities are fortified by the Palestinians who live in constant combat with Israel. Isaiah tells us that after the conflict they will no longer be fortified.
- Royal power will disappear from Damascus.

- Apparently after Damascus is destroyed it will no longer be the capital city of Syria, if such a nation even exists after the conflict.
- The glory of Jacob will fade as a result of the war. Yet Isaiah says that hope will remain, just as some olives are still left in the branches after an olive tree is beaten.
  - The remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the Israelites. Aram's glory will be diminished by the war just as Israel's will be. According to the entry from the *Bible Encyclopedia*, Aram is simply the Hebrew designation for the land of Syria.
  - Their strong cities (Aram's) will be abandoned because of the Israelites and become desolate.

One of the most important spiritual results of this war will be that the people who fought against Israel, specifically the people of Aram, will “*look to their Maker and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel.*” These people who turn to God, and look away from their altars and their Asherah poles and incense altars, are the very people who are forced to abandon their strong cities because of Israel.

The predictions regarding Aram refer to the people of Syria and could also refer to the people known as the modern Assyrians. After the death and resurrection of Christ ancient Assyria was the first nation to accept Christianity and the Assyrian Church was founded by the Apostles Thomas, Bartholomew and Thaddeus in 33 AD. The modern Assyrian people, today numbering about 3.3 million, occupy an area of about fifty thousand square miles, predominantly in a region located in Syria, western Iran, northern Iraq and southern Turkey.

After the conflict predicted in Isaiah 17 many of Israel's enemies will turn back to God. However, Israel will not experience any sort of national spiritual revival until after

the Magog invasion when the invading army is destroyed through divine intervention in the form of hail and fire falling from the sky. At that time God will say,

“I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. **I will no longer let my holy name be profaned**, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel,” (Ezekiel 39:7).

Isaiah 17 will result in the spiritual revival of some of Israel’s enemies, but it will also bring about the fall of the modern nation of Syria, as well as the defeat of the Palestinians and perhaps also Lebanon and Jordan. That helps to explain why these nations, who are Israel’s traditional foes, do not take part in the massive invasion of Israel that is led by Gog of the land of Magog described in Ezekiel 38-39.

The final passages of Isaiah 17 tie the prophecy of Isaiah back to Psalm 83. The “*raging of many nations*” compares with the conspiracy of the many nations to destroy Israel. In the Psalm the goal of the conspiracy is to take possession of the “*pasturelands of God*,” and in Isaiah the goal of Israel’s enemies is given as “*loot and plunder*.”

The connection is confirmed when the plea made by the Psalmist is compared with Isaiah’s description of the raging of Israel’s enemies and God’s response. In the psalm Asaph had cried out to God asking Him to, “*Make them like tumbleweed, O my God, like chaff before the wind*.” Isaiah tells us that the future conflict that includes the destruction of Damascus will be an answer to Asaph’s plea when he writes,

“Although the peoples roar like the roar of surging waters, when he rebukes them they flee far away, **driven before the wind like chaff on the hills, like tumbleweed before a gale**. In the evening, sudden terror! Before the morning, they are gone!” (Isaiah 17:13-14)

This combination of metaphors, of Israel's enemies being compared to chaff and tumbleweeds driven before the wind, only appears in the Bible in these two passages, Psalm 83 and Isaiah 17. Through Isaiah God gives His direct answer to Asaph's plea voiced within the psalm.

The conflict described in Isaiah 17, a conflict in which Israel is overwhelmingly victorious over her neighbors, could well be the war in which Israel is "*recovered from*" prior to the Magog invasion that is mentioned in Ezekiel 38:8. It is a war that may finally give Israel a brief period of peace and safety.

The next prophecy given by Isaiah, a prophecy of the nation of Cush, helps to confirm many of the connections that we have already made.

### **The Formation of the Magog Alliance**

The nations that make up the Magog alliance of Ezekiel 38 are Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer and Togarmah. The leader of the alliance is named as Gog, of the land of Magog (Russia or Turkey), who is the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. The prophecy of Isaiah 18 is a prophecy of Cush, which most likely refers to Sudan, or perhaps to Ethiopia,

“Woe to the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush, which sends envoys by sea in papyrus boats over the water. Go, swift messengers, to a people tall and smooth-skinned, to a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers. All you people of the world, you who live on the earth, when a banner is raised on the mountains, you will see it, and when a trumpet sounds, you will hear it.

This is what the LORD says to me: ‘I will

remain quiet and will look on from my dwelling place, like shimmering heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.’ For, before the harvest, when the blossom is gone and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he will cut off the shoots with pruning knives, and cut down and take away the spreading branches. They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey and to the wild animals; the birds will feed on them all summer, the wild animals all winter.

At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD Almighty from a people tall and smooth-skinned, from a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers— the gifts will be brought to Mount Zion, the place of the Name of the LORD Almighty.” (Isaiah 18)

This prophecy begins with a description of envoys traveling from Cush to a nation that is described in the following manner:

- It is a nation of people tall and smooth skinned
- It is a powerful nation feared far and wide
- It is a nation of strange speech
- Its land is divided by rivers

This description could conceivably apply to either Turkey or Russia. Regardless of which nation Ezekiel meant when he referred to “*the land of Magog*” the important thing to note is the result that comes from the envoys of Cush traveling to this strange land,

“All you people of the world, you who live on the earth, when a banner is raised on the mountains,

you will see it, and when a trumpet sounds, you will hear it.” (Isaiah 18:3)

A banner and a trumpet are both symbols of an advancing army, and the reference to “*mountains*” compares with the Magog invasion that advances upon the “*mountains of Israel*” (Ezekiel 39:2). All the people of the world will see the banner and hear the trumpet.

The next thing that the prophet Isaiah describes is a strange pause in heaven after the Lord looks down and sees the army coming against his people,

“This is what the LORD says to me: ‘I will remain quiet and will look on from my dwelling place, like shimmering heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.’” (Isaiah 18:4)

Remember that the destruction of the Magog invasion comes from a plague of fiery hail from the sky described in Ezekiel 38-39 and in the first Trumpet judgment of Revelation. Immediately prior to the blowing of the first Trumpet there is a similar pause described in Revelation,

“When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.”  
(Revelation 8:1)

After God’s moment of “*quiet*” in His “*dwelling place*” described in Isaiah 18:4, which matches the brief “*silence in heaven*” of the seventh Seal, the prophet Isaiah goes on to describe the results of the destruction of the army that has many similarities with the words of Ezekiel. Compare the two descriptions,

“For, before the harvest, when the blossom is



gone and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he will cut off the shoots with pruning knives, and cut down and take away the spreading branches. They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey and to the wild animals; the birds will feed on them all summer, the wild animals all winter.” (Isaiah 18:5-6)

“Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals: Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrifice I am preparing for you, the great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood.” (Ezekiel 39:17)

All of these prophecies from Ezekiel, Revelation and Isaiah appear to correspond and tie together, and they confirm our chronology of events that will occur at the beginning of the great and terrible Day of the Lord.

## **Egypt in the Day of the Lord**

The last major nation that has always had a close relationship with Israel that we have not accounted for is Egypt, and Isaiah explains what will happen to this nation in his next chapter,

“An oracle concerning Egypt: See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt tremble before him, and the hearts of the Egyptians melt within them. ‘I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian— brother will fight against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. The Egyptians will lose heart, and I will bring their plans

to nothing; they will consult the idols and the spirits of the dead, the mediums and the spiritists. I will hand the Egyptians over to the power of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them,' declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty." (Isaiah 19:1-4)

If Egypt is not involved in any of the major attacks upon Israel up to and throughout the Day of the Lord it will be because it is destined to crumble from the internal fighting of a civil war. In the end order will be restored when power falls into the hands of a "*cruel master*" who is also a "*mighty king*." This may refer to the Antichrist's takeover of Egypt that is also predicted in Daniel 11:42.

Isaiah's prophecies continue,

"The waters of the river will dry up, and the riverbed will be parched and dry. The canals will stink; the streams of Egypt will dwindle and dry up. The reeds and rushes will wither, also the plants along the Nile, at the mouth of the river. Every sown field along the Nile will become parched, will blow away and be no more. The fishermen will groan and lament, all who cast hooks into the Nile; those who throw nets on the water will pine away. Those who work with combed flax will despair, the weavers of fine linen will lose hope. The workers in cloth will be dejected, and all the wage earners will be sick at heart." (Isaiah 19:5-10)

The great Nile River and all its canals and tributaries will dry up during the Day of the Lord. This could come as result of a plague from one of the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:6), or from the drought that will come as a result of the fourth Bowl judgment (Revelation 16:8-9). The sixth Bowl causes a similar drying up of the Euphrates

River. Isaiah continues,

“The officials of Zoan are nothing but fools; the wise counselors of Pharaoh give senseless advice. How can you say to Pharaoh, ‘I am one of the wise men, a disciple of the ancient kings’? Where are your wise men now? Let them show you and make known what the LORD Almighty has planned against Egypt. The officials of Zoan have become fools, the leaders of Memphis are deceived; the cornerstones of her peoples have led Egypt astray. The LORD has poured into them a spirit of dizziness; they make Egypt stagger in all that she does, as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit. There is nothing Egypt can do— head or tail, palm branch or reed. In that day the Egyptians will be like women. They will shudder with fear at the uplifted hand that the LORD Almighty raises against them. And the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians; everyone to whom Judah is mentioned will be terrified, because of what the LORD Almighty is planning against them.” (Isaiah 19:11-17)

In the last days many calamities will befall Egypt. Their leaders will appear as fools, and the people will realize that their historic mistreatment of Israel and the Jewish people merits a punishment from God. However, even as God will punish, He will also show mercy, as Isaiah confirms at the end of his prophecy,

“In that day five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD Almighty. One of them will be called the City of Destruction. In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt, and a monument

to the LORD at its border. It will be a sign and witness to the LORD Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will send them a savior and defender, and he will rescue them.

So the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the LORD. They will worship with sacrifices and grain offerings; they will make vows to the LORD and keep them. The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the LORD, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them.

In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, ‘Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.’” (Isaiah 19:18-25)

## **Conclusion**

The destruction of the city of Damascus and the crushing defeat of Israel’s immediate neighbors may lead to Israel finally achieving a brief period of “*peace and safety*.”

It is in just such an atmosphere that the Magog alliance against Israel will be formed, and it is the Magog invasion that will cause God’s intervention into world affairs to protect Israel from certain destruction. This intervention will first take the form of cosmic signs and the shaking of the earth, and it will be preceded by the rapture into heaven of

every human being that believes in and serves Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

The signs that will follow or accompany the rapture are the signs of a darkening of the sun, the moon turning **red like blood**, and falling stars. I suspect that these signs will last long enough for every person on earth to see them, so a reasonable conclusion is that they must last for up to 24 hours before the entire earth is shaken.

Regarding the resurrection, chapter seven commented on the historical connection between resurrections and earthquakes. Perhaps the global shaking of the earth signifies that the global resurrection of dead believers from “*every nation, tribe, people and language*.”

A question regarding God’s initial intervention is raised by the curious fact that although His anger is roused by the invasion of Israel, His first actions are taken against the *entire earth* when He causes the earth to shake, rather than specifically against the invaders. However, the shaking of the earth does appear to cause, or at least contribute to, the madness that strikes the Magog invaders which leads them to fight against each other (Ezekiel 38:21).

The question that must be grappled with is that of the curious pause in heaven, after the shaking of the earth, but before the first Trumpet judgment which *does* strike the Magog invaders directly (as well as other areas of the earth). This pause is mentioned after the opening of the seventh Seal and also in Isaiah 18:4 in connection with a similar alliance of invaders into Israel. In Isaiah’s narrative the invaders are destroyed only *after* the pause in heaven.

These points lead to the possibility that perhaps God’s anger against the members of the Magog alliance is caused merely by their conspiracy and their *intention*, which is described as an “*evil scheme*” in Ezekiel 38:10-12. Perhaps God causes the earth to shake as a way of drawing the conspirators into the actual invasion. Whether or not the shaking

of the earth induces the invasion it does appear that somehow God Himself acts to pull the invaders into the battle, as it says in Ezekiel 38:4, “*I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army...*”

In any case, a global shaking or polar-shift type event would definitely neutralize the military effectiveness of the current dominant power in the region, namely, the United States. The US Military, as well as the Israeli military, is highly dependant on satellites for essentials such as intelligence and communications, and they are also an integral part of the guidance systems of missiles, and for navigation of ships, planes, and even tanks. In a polar shift event all orbiting satellites would be instantly and perhaps indefinitely transformed into useless space junk. In this situation Israel and the US would both be completely vulnerable to conventional massed infantry and armor attacks, such as appear to be described in Ezekiel.

After the shaking of the earth of the sixth Seal of Revelation, and after the pause in heaven of the seventh Seal, then the catastrophic judgments against the earth begin in earnest. In Revelation 7:1-3 the first four angels who blow the first four Trumpets are told to wait until the sealing of the 144,000 of Israel. These first four judgments are said to affect the “*the land and the sea.*” I believe these judgments, the first four Trumpets, should be viewed as a group of judgments that are enacted very close together after the pause in heaven of the seventh Seal.

The first appears to be very closely related with the destruction of the Magog invaders as chapter six explained. The first Trumpet may also be directed at end-times Babylon, which suffers an initial punishment of fire from God (Revelation 18:8-9). The first Trumpet affects “*the land*” by burning up a third of the earth, a third of the trees and all the green grass.

The second Trumpet appears to bring a gigantic meteor

that strikes the ocean at an unknown place. This judgment affects “*the sea*” and one third of the sea creatures and one third of the ships are destroyed. In Revelation 18:17-19 the shipmasters who profit from Babylon’s economy wail after Babylon is destroyed by fire, but then they will face even more disaster when many of their ships are destroyed. A meteor impact into the ocean may also be signified by the actions of the angel in Revelation 18:21,

“Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: ‘With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.’”

A related fate for Babylon is suggested by the prophet Jeremiah who wrote (51:42), “*The sea will rise over Babylon; its roaring waves will cover her.*”

The third Trumpet affects *the land* indirectly by causing one third of the fresh water to go bitter. Perhaps it is the result of the fallout from the sky after the preceding meteor impact.

The fourth Trumpet could also be interpreted as another possible result of the meteor impact because it causes the natural light sources of the sun, moon and stars to be dimmed by a third. This is something that scientists predict in “nuclear winter” type scenarios, which is what a massive meteor impact would cause. The dimming of the sun would affect *the land’s* capacity for agriculture, which could easily contribute to a global famine and various other related hardships.

The first four Trumpets should be viewed as a group, and the beginning of the Apocalypse appears to have two initial stages: first the cosmic signs and the polar-shift event, then a pause, and then the combined devastation from the fiery hailstones over a third of the earth (first Trumpet) and the single major meteor impact into the ocean (second Trumpet). The

latter appears to contribute to or cause the residual and long-term affects of the third and fourth Trumpets.

It is in this atmosphere, after these devastating events, that Israel will recover from the Magog invasion, bury the dead, and begin to burn the fuel source that was captured (Ezekiel 39:9). This will also be the atmosphere in which the Antichrist will become known and begin his rise to power as a man of spiritual knowledge, possessing an apparent love for humanity, and with a program to begin mankind's journey into the glorious New Age. If you do not know the Bible and the saving message of Jesus Christ it will be hard **not** to love and admire him.

This is also the time when Israel will sign an agreement with an authority figure based in Rome that will signal the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. Immediately after this agreement is signed the Two Witnesses will appear in Israel and they too will become well-known figures on the global stage. The Bible says that because they speak the truth against the Antichrist's flattering lies that humanity will **hate** them (11:10). The Two Witnesses will remain in Israel and perhaps, as in their Old Testament careers, Joshua and Zerubbabel will aid in the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple that will be completed by the midpoint of the seventieth week.

The first half of the seventieth week of Daniel will be characterized by mankind's recovery from the devastation that came from the sky, and during this time the Antichrist will rise to power. There will also be a spiritual revival in Israel, led by the Two Witnesses and the 144,000, but this revival will be viewed negatively by the rest of the world. During this first 42-month period (three and a half years) the world will turn to the Antichrist, who will be helped by his most important promoter, the False Prophet, who I believe will be based in Rome. This possibility is also reinforced by Catholic prophecy which is full of predictions of a final anti-



Pope who will try to lead the faithful astray.

The first half of the seventieth week will be a rebuilding period for mankind, and a testing period for each individual. The only judgments that will fall during this period are the two demonic invasions brought by the fifth and sixth Trumpets. They are also referred to as the first two “Woes” in Revelation 8:13. The first Woe brings an invasion of demons that cause terrible suffering for five months, while the second is a devastating invasion of 200 million demons that kills off a third of the human population. The sixth Trumpet invasion is also described in Joel 2:1-11.

Some prophecy scholars believe that the sixth Trumpet describes a human army that they associate with the “kings of the east” of Revelation 16:12, because at one time China claimed it could field an army of 200 million strong. Joel’s invasion describes an army of huge numbers, the greatest army ever fielded, and both Joel and Revelation describe the invaders as appearing like horses, leaving terrible devastation in their wake. However, it is my belief that this unstoppable horse-like army led by four fallen angels, breathing smoke and fire and unable to be wounded, is not Chinese.

At the midpoint of the seventieth week the Antichrist will triumph. He will gain control of Jerusalem’s holy sites (perhaps with help from the Vatican) and the False Prophet will set up his image in the Holy Place of the Temple. At this point the Two Witnesses will be killed as well, after which mankind will celebrate by giving each other gifts (11:10).

At this time the spiritual/economic program of the Mark of the Beast will be enforced globally. The Antichrist and the False Prophet will be backed up by the ten kings that rule the world and together they will set up a system in which every human being will be required to have a mark, tattoo, or computer chip on or in their right hand or forehead. This Mark will be required for all financial transactions. Those who take it will be punished forever in the lake of fire by

God, while those who refuse to take it will be imprisoned and/or killed by a world loyal to the Antichrist.

The judgments of the second half of the seventieth week begin with the third “Woe” which is simply the seventh Trumpet that brings forth the seven Bowl judgments. The seventh Trumpet will probably be blown many months or perhaps even a year or more after the Mark of the Beast is first adopted and enforced globally. This is because the very first Bowl judgment is a plague of painful sores upon every human being that has taken the Mark, and a period of time must be allowed for the Mark to be set up as a program before its negative effects are felt.

The second and third Bowls will cause the fresh water of the lakes and rivers and the water of the seas to all turn to blood. The reason for this judgment is that because mankind has *shed* the blood of saints and prophets they will also be forced to *drink* blood (16:5-6).

The fourth Bowl will cause the sun to be felt much more hotter on the earth. By this point the majority of mankind will know that they have chosen to side with Satan against the Creator and as they are scorched and seared by the heat they will curse God and refuse to repent.

The fifth Bowl reverses the judgment, and instead of heat from the sun the world will be plunged into darkness.

The sixth Bowl dries up the Euphrates River allowing the “kings from the East” (this time perhaps including China) to gather at Armageddon.

The seventh Bowl brings the last cosmic disturbance. Again the earth will be hit by hailstones from the sky and again the earth will be shaken violently. What is left of Babylon will also be finally destroyed, as well as the cities of the rest of the nations. It will be the last plague of the Apocalypse, to be followed by the Second Coming.

**I saw heaven standing open and  
there before me was a white horse,  
whose rider is called Faithful and True.  
With justice he judges and makes war.  
His eyes are like blazing fire,  
and on his head are many crowns.  
On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:  
KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

**“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me,  
and I will give to everyone  
according to what he has done.  
I am the Alpha and the Omega,  
the First and the Last,  
the Beginning and the End.”**

(Revelation 19:11-12,16, 22:12-13)

The most fundamental promise of the Christian faith, from the very beginning of its existence, has been the promise that Jesus is coming back. That promise will be kept. *Be ready.*



# *Appendices*

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# Appendix I:

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## A Study of the Seventy Weeks

**B**ecause Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks creates a foundation that makes Bible prophecy so easy to understand, it should be no surprise that many attempts have been made to discredit it as a prophecy that pertains to the future. This chapter will examine some of the many different competing views which have been put forward by scholars over the years, views which are not supported by the Bible or by plain common sense.

### The Starting Point of the Seventy Weeks

Daniel 9:25 predicted the exact time of the appearance of the Messiah, which was to come exactly sixty-nine "weeks" from "*the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.*"

The word translated as "decree" in the passage above from the NIV translation comes from the Hebrew word *dabar*. The NASB also translates *dabar* as "decree," while the KJV and ASV give it as "commandment," and the NKJV translates it as "command." However, by far the most common English translation of the Hebrew word *dabar* through-

out the Old Testament is simply as “word.” Daniel’s prophecy would begin when the “word” to rebuild Jerusalem was given.

Who gave the order to rebuild Jerusalem, and when was it given? There are several different possibilities that we will examine which have been put forward by different scholars over the years:

1. King Cyrus of Persia in 538 BC.
2. King Darius in 520 BC.
3. King Artaxerxes of Babylon in 457 BC.
4. King Artaxerxes in 445 BC.

**The decree made by King Cyrus** is recorded in 2 Chronicles 36:23, Ezra 1:1-4 and Ezra 6:1-5. It was a written proclamation given specifically for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem:

“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.’”

The decree given by Cyrus was described as a *qowl* in the original Hebrew text. It was not a *dabar* and it is interpreted in English as a “proclamation.” It was given to bring about the rebuilding of the Temple, and in it Cyrus makes no mention of the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem.

Some scholars point to Isaiah 44:28 and 45:13 as proof that Cyrus did issue an order to rebuild Jerusalem, but this order is not recorded elsewhere in the Bible and the date of it is unknown. When Daniel received the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks the angel Gabriel told him to “*Know therefore and understand...*” How would this decree be understood if it was never mentioned in Scripture? There was no decree that was given by Cyrus that fulfilled the



specifications regarding Daniel's prophecy and the *dabar* to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

If such as a decree was given, then the Messiah would have appeared to Jerusalem 483 years after it was given. Cyrus' reign lasted from 559-530 BC, meaning that the Messiah would have had to come in the time of roughly 76-47 BC. Clearly there is no decree given by Cyrus that fits the qualifications of the *dabar* to rebuild Jerusalem as written down in Daniel 9:25.

**The decree of King Darius** is recorded in Ezra 6:6-12. In the years after the reign of King Cyrus the Jews had returned to Babylon and begun to rebuild the Temple. At the time of Darius this work was still being done, but some of the Persian officials questioned the Jews' authority to do it. A search was made for the original decree given by Cyrus, it was found, and then Darius simply decreed that work should continue and the Temple should be rebuilt, just as Cyrus had originally decreed. The decree made by Darius made no mention of rebuilding the city, and for the same reasons given for Cyrus' decree, this decree had nothing to do with the *dabar* to rebuild Jerusalem as prophesied by Daniel.

**The decree given by King Artaxerxes in 457 BC** is recorded in Ezra 7:11-26. It was a decree allowing Ezra and many Jewish families to leave Babylon and return to Israel. This decree was made concerning the Temple of God, and Ezra was allowed to take back with him all of the Temple articles that had been plundered and taken away by Babylon years earlier. Ezra was allowed to create a fund and to take silver, wheat, wine, olive oil and salt to make sure that worship in the Temple might be adequately supported. Ezra was also given authority over the entire region to teach and to judge regarding the Laws of Israel.

This decree made no mention of the rebuilding of the

city of Jerusalem. In fact, when Artaxerxes first took office he received a report that the Jews were rebuilding Jerusalem, restoring the walls and repairing the foundations. After hearing this Artaxerxes issued an order that all of this work should stop, “*so that this city will not be rebuilt until I so order*” (Ezra 4:21). Ezra was allowed to return to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes’ reign, but he was *not* given permission to rebuild the city.

The decree in Ezra 7:11-26 only concerned a repatriation of some of the Jews and the promotion of the Temple worship. Artaxerxes’ decree in 457 BC could not have fulfilled the predicted *dabar* to rebuild Jerusalem that was prophesied by Daniel.

**The decree given by King Artaxerxes in 445 BC** is recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-9,

“In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; so the king asked me, ‘Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.’ I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, ‘May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?’ The king said to me, ‘What is it you want?’

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, ‘If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried *so that I can rebuild it.*’ Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, ‘How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?’ *It*

*pleased the king to send me*; so I set a time...”

Nehemiah asked King Artaxerxes if he might return to Jerusalem in order to rebuild it, and King Artaxerxes granted his request. Earlier in his reign Artaxerxes had commanded that the unauthorized rebuilding of Jerusalem be stopped until he decided to give official permission for it to begin. In the 20<sup>th</sup> year of his reign Artaxerxes finally gave that permission to his royal bartender, the Jewish prophet Nehemiah.

Nehemiah also asked the king for a letter giving him safe-conduct to Israel, and for a letter allowing him to take timbers from the king’s forest to rebuild the gates, the walls and his own residence in Jerusalem. These letters then became proof that the king had given permission for the rebuilding of the holy city of Jerusalem. Some scholars believe that the letters constitute the *dabar* to rebuild the city. This can be easily refuted because the letters themselves were not any sort of decree or word that dealt directly with rebuilding Jerusalem. The *dabar* to rebuild the city was simply the *verbal permission* given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes. This *dabar* was backed up by the letters that Nehemiah was given, but the letters themselves were not the *dabar*.

After Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and surveyed the terrible shape that the city was in, he approached the Jewish officials who controlled the city,

“Then I said to them, ‘You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.’” (Nehemiah 2:17)

Then Nehemiah told them about the authority that he had received from King Artaxerxes to carry out this task, “*Then I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to*

*me and also about the king's words [dabar, plural] which he had spoken to me...*" (Nehemiah 2:18, NASB)

King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah several *dabars* ("the king's words") concerning the Jews and Jerusalem, and one of them was the *dabar* to rebuild Jerusalem. This fact is proven by the response that Nehemiah received after telling the Jews what King Artaxerxes had said:

"Then I told them... about the king's words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, "*Let us arise and build.*" So they put their hands to the good work." (Nehemiah 2:18, NASB)

It was the verbal permission that Nehemiah received that constituted the *dabar* to rebuild the holy city of Jerusalem, which fulfilled the prediction of the *dabar* in Daniel 7:25. This *dabar* marked the beginning of the sixty-nine week countdown until the coming of the Messiah.

The prophet Daniel predicted that the city would be rebuilt, "...*but in times of trouble*" (Daniel 9:25). This was certainly the case, because Nehemiah seemed to face opposition to the rebuilding of the city from every side, beginning immediately with Nehemiah 2:19.

After the work began Nehemiah was forced to arm half of his men with swords and spears to protect the workers from the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod who were threatening to attack. Later on, Israel's enemies created lies and distortions to try to end Artaxerxes' support for Nehemiah. When the wall around Jerusalem was finally completed, Israel's enemies realized that their plots and intimidations had failed:

**"So the wall was completed** on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations

were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.” (Nehemiah 6:15-16)

The *dabar* given by Artaxerxes in 445 BC is the only one in history that fulfilled the words of the prophet Daniel that were to mark the beginning of the Seventy Weeks:

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment (*dabar*) to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: **the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.**” (Daniel 9:25, KJV)

The sixty-nine week countdown until the coming of the Messiah began in the month of Nisan, in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of King Artaxerxes Longimanus of Babylon, who began his reign in July, 465 BC. The first day of the month of Nisan in his 20<sup>th</sup> year corresponds to March 14, 445 BC. Sixty-nine weeks of (360-day) years later (173,880 days) Jesus rode into Jerusalem as the crowd acknowledged Him as the Messiah.

The next section will deal with viewpoints which dispute the fact that the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ to the city of Jerusalem was the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy.

### **When did the Messiah “come” in fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy?**

There are three different answers to the question above that have been put forward by different scholars over the years:

1. Jesus fulfilled Daniel's prophecy at his birth, dated anywhere from 7 BC to 1 AD.
2. Jesus fulfilled Daniel's prophecy at his baptism, dated differently from 27-30 BC.
3. Jesus fulfilled Daniel's prophecy when he publicly entered Jerusalem as the Messiah in 32 AD.

**The birth of Jesus Christ** is considered by some to be the fulfillment of Daniel's predicted appearance of the Messiah to Israel. However, there are several problems with this view. First of all, it lacks a starting point. Daniel predicted that there would be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks from the *dabar* to rebuild Jerusalem until the appearance of the Messiah. Sixty-nine weeks is 483 prophetic years, and 483 years before Jesus' birth, within the period of roughly 490-482 BC, there is no historical record of a *dabar* to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

Another major point to address is the fact that Daniel's prophecy was given concerning two things: "Seventy weeks have been decreed **for your people and your holy city...**" (Daniel 9:24, NASB).

The prophecy concerned **the Jews** and the holy city of **Jerusalem**. The prophetic countdown begins in verse 25 with the command to rebuild Jerusalem, in verse 26 it predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, and in verse 27 the prophecy predicts renewed sacrifices in Jerusalem's Temple and the abomination of desolation. If this prophecy is given to Jerusalem and involves Jerusalem, then certainly the appearance of the Messiah would involve Jerusalem as well. In this case the birth of Jesus could not have been meant in Daniel's prophecy, which took place in Bethlehem and not Jerusalem.

A final point is that Jesus refrained from making a definitive public and verbal claim to be the Messiah until he entered Jerusalem in 32 AD. If he had fulfilled Daniel's

prophecy at an earlier date then why did he keep the plain truth of his identity from the public?

**The baptism of Jesus Christ** is the preferred choice for the fulfillment of the appearance of the Messiah for a number of scholars, but it lacks Biblical support in the same areas as that of his birth.

The starting point for this date of fulfillment would be near to 457 BC, when Artaxerxes made the decree allowing Ezra to return to Israel. But as shown above, this decree had nothing to do with the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, and just as his birth, the baptism of Jesus had nothing to do with the city of Jerusalem, which took place on the edge of Galilee in the river Jordan.

The plain truth is that everything about Jesus' ministry pointed to the day when he entered Jerusalem on a donkey. Only then did he publicly acknowledge to the entire nation, at the beginning of the national Passover holiday, that he was indeed the Messiah.

If Jesus fulfilled Daniel's prediction for the coming of the Messiah at his baptism, then what possible explanation exists for his refusal to publicly and definitively acknowledge his Messiahship until the triumphal entry?

**The triumphal entry of Jesus Christ as the Messiah to the holy city of Jerusalem** took place, as calculated in chapter one, in the spring of 32 AD. The Biblical record is clear that prior to this momentous occasion Jesus refrained from making definitive Messianic claims of Himself in public.

In Nazareth after his baptism near the beginning of his ministry, Jesus read a passage containing Messianic implications from Isaiah's scroll, and then he said, "*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*" (Luke 4:14-29). Yet Jesus only claimed to be a prophet (Luke 4:24) before he was thrown out of the synagogue.

After leaving Nazareth Jesus journeyed to Capernaum, where he again spoke at a synagogue on the Sabbath. There Jesus was confronted with a demon-possessed man, and upon seeing Jesus the demon spoke through the man and said, *“Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!”* (Luke 4:34). The demon recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, but Jesus told the demon to be quiet and then cast it out.

After Jesus left the synagogue he went to the home of Peter’s mother-in-law. There he healed the sick and performed many miracles. Luke records, *“Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ”* (Luke 4:41).

The Gospel of Luke is clear that Jesus wanted to keep his identity a secret, because he wanted the people and especially the leaders of Israel to decide for themselves who he was, without any sort of undue prodding or influence.

Over the course of his ministry Jesus did slowly reveal who he was to a number of individuals, but only on a private basis. At one time Jesus struck up a conversation with a Samaritan woman beside a well. After pointing out her sinful past the woman marveled at Jesus’ ability to know this, and then she said, *“I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”* Jesus responded to her saying, *“I who speak to you am he.”*

After this the woman went into the village and because of her testimony the village invited Jesus to stay with them. After they had listened to Jesus they said to the woman, *“...we know that this man really is the Savior of the world”* (John 4). However, these people were Samaritans, and this did not constitute a public revelation to Israel.

At another time Jesus privately challenged his own disciples as to the nature of his identity:



“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’

‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, **‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’** Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven...’ Then he warned his disciples **not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.**” (Matthew 16:13-20)

Jesus continued to refrain from making definitive verbal Messianic claims of himself both before and after he was rejected as the Messiah by the religious leaders of Israel (Matthew 12:22-45, Mark 3:22-30). At one time *after* he was rejected, his own brothers asked Jesus to accompany them to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. They wondered why he was continuing to be publicly vague about his identity and they said to him, *“No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.”*

Jesus responded by saying,

**“The right time** for me has not yet come; for you any time is right. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, **because for me the right time has not yet come**” (John 7:6-8).

The **right time** had not yet come for the Messiah to publicly appear to Israel and Jerusalem in fulfillment of Daniel’s

prophecy, which is the **only** Old Testament prophecy that predicted the exact **time** of the coming of the Messiah. For this reason Jesus decided to go to the Feast alone and in secret, without his brothers.

While at the feast Jesus spoke in the Temple and his cover was blown. The Jews at the feast asked him, “*Who are you.*” Jesus responded by saying “*Just what I have been claiming all along.*” Again, Jesus refused to clearly say “*I am the Messiah*” (John 8:25).

The next time Jesus came to Jerusalem was at the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah),

“It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon’s Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him, saying, ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? ***If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.***’ Jesus answered, ‘I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.’” (John 10:22-29)

Jesus *did* prove to Israel’s leaders who he was, but it was not through his own verbal claims, rather it was through his Messianic miracles that he had proven himself to be the Messiah.

Jesus waited until the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan at the beginning of the Feast of Passover, exactly 173,880 days after Artaxerxes gave the word to rebuild Jerusalem, to make the public claim that he was the Messiah. On this day Jesus told his disciples

to first go ahead of him and bring back to him a young donkey that had been made ready.

Daniel 9:25 predicted the day on which the Messiah would come to the “holy people” and the “holy city,” and the prophet Zechariah predicted the manner in which the appearance of the Messiah would take place,

“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”  
Zechariah 9:9

Daniel’s prophecy states, “...until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes...” The word “ruler” is the Hebrew word *nagiyd*. The Messiah would come as one who had authority to rule, and that is how the people greeted him as he rode into Jerusalem on the back of the donkey. They cried out, “*Blessed is the king, who comes in the name of the Lord!*” “*Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!*” and “*Blessed is the king of Israel!*” (Luke 19:38, Mark 11:10, John 12:13).

By riding into Jerusalem on a donkey while the crowd cheered him as the Messiah Jesus was making a provocative, unmistakable and Scriptural claim to be Israel’s Messiah. This was a very public and definitive claim, made to the nation of Israel and to the city of Jerusalem at the national Feast of Passover. There was no mistaking this claim.

**Prior to this time Jesus had rebuked those who wanted to publicly proclaim him as the Messiah, but on this day Jesus said that if the people who were welcoming Jesus as the Messiah were silent the very stones would cry out and testify that He was the Messiah! (Luke 19:40).**

Before Jesus entered Jerusalem he stopped and wept over it, because he had already been rejected. He knew that the nation of Israel as a whole did not understand the day

that was being fulfilled, and He also spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem that was also predicted in Daniel's prophecy:

“If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, *because you did not recognize the time* of God's coming to you.” Luke 19:41-44

Surely the appearance of Jesus Christ as the Messiah to the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, riding on the back of a donkey, was the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy predicting the coming of the Messiah. There is no other choice that can possibly be supported by the Bible or by plain common sense.

The first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel's prophecy culminated with the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ on Palm Sunday to the city of Jerusalem. Now we will examine the 70<sup>th</sup> and final week of Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

### A 70<sup>th</sup> Week Challenge

Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks was given concerning the Jews and the holy city of Jerusalem. If the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of this prophecy is to be fulfilled in our future, prior to the Second Coming, then it means that the Jews and Jerusalem also have a place in God's future. For this reason many scholars, for a variety of reasons, have attempted to prove that the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel's prophecy has already

been fulfilled in the past.

The first argument that comes from this perspective is that there can be no gap between the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> Week and the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup>. If the 70<sup>th</sup> Week is to be fulfilled in our future then there must be a gap of about 2000 years between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> Weeks. Is such a gap Scriptural? Well yes, because this gap is clearly shown within Daniel's prophecy itself in verse 26. It comes after the appearance of the Messiah predicted in verse 25, but before the 70<sup>th</sup> and final week is confirmed in verse 27.

Just as there is a gap in the prophecy of Isaiah read by Jesus in the synagogue in Nazareth, between the first part of Isaiah 61:2 and the last part of Isaiah 61:2, which hints of a gap between the first and second comings of the Messiah, so there is also a gap between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> Weeks of Daniel's prophecy.

Verse 26 of Daniel's prophecy tells us that within this gap would come the death of the Messiah and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. The start of the Seventieth Week was not predicted to begin until *after* Jerusalem was destroyed, which happened in 70 AD. The gap in the prophecy could hardly be made clearer, and the Seventieth Week remains unfulfilled.

In any case, let us examine one of the viewpoints put forth that places the fulfillment of the Seventieth Week in the past. Below is an interpretation offered and dogmatically supported by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Adventists are taught that the physical nation of Israel plays no part in end-times prophecy, so they must show that the 70<sup>th</sup> Week is in the past. This interpretation comes from the Adventist publication, *Signs of the Times* from the December 1997 issue, page 26:

“457 B.C. – Verse 25 specifies the starting point of the 490-year time period: ‘From the going forth

of the command to restore and build Jerusalem...’ The decree of the Persian emperor Artaxerxes, issued in 457 B.C., best fits this description.

A.D. 27 – Verse 25 goes on to note the span between the starting point and the appearance of ‘Messiah the Prince’: 483 years (‘seven weeks and threescore and two weeks’). This span reaches to A.D. 27, the year of the event that marked the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry – His baptism, at which God the Father confirmed His role by voice and by a symbolic anointing through the descent of the Holy Spirit.

A.D. 31 – Verses 26, 27 refer to Jesus’ crucifixion: ‘After the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself.’ ‘...In the middle of the week, He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.’ Jesus’ death, which fulfilled and made obsolete the Old Testament sacrificial system, came in the middle of that final ‘week’ of years – which would have put it in the spring of A.D. 31.

A.D. 34 – Verse 24 says the full 490 years was a probationary period for Israel, ‘to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin ...to bring in everlasting righteousness’ and so forth. So the prophecy ends in A.D. 34, about the time when Stephen was executed by the Jewish ruling council. That event drove most Christian believers from Judah. Subsequently, Gentiles soon made up the majority of the church.”

Here are a few of the reasons why the interpretation found in this article is wrong from start to finish:

1. This article states that the starting point of the Seventy Weeks, the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, was given in 457 BC by Artaxerxes. This decree is recorded in Ezra 7:11-26. Perhaps the text describing this decree was not included in the article because if people were to read it they would see that it makes absolutely no mention of the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. The decree to rebuild Jerusalem was not given by Artaxerxes until years later in 445 B.C. The starting point given in this article is just plain wrong and contradicted by Scripture.

2. The baptism of Jesus Christ, as calculated based on Luke 3:1 and using the historical records of Tiberius Caesar, occurred in 28 A.D., rather than in 27 A.D (See chapter one).

3. Jesus' ministry did begin with his baptism, but he refrained from publicly claiming to be the Messiah until he appeared to Jerusalem as the Messiah at the beginning of the Passover holiday.

4. The Seventy Weeks deal with the Jews and Jerusalem, as stated at the very beginning of the prophecy. The baptism of Jesus had nothing to do with the city of Jerusalem, and could not have been the predicted appearance of the Messiah to the Jews and Jerusalem as their "ruler."

5. Verse 26 does refer to Jesus' crucifixion, but Jesus did not die in the middle of the seventieth week. He died after the 69<sup>th</sup> but prior to the 70<sup>th</sup>, within the clear gap which is given in verse 26. His death did not put a stop to the sacrifices and offerings. It made them obsolete in the eyes of God, but they were still continued until the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.

6. This article maintains that Jesus Christ is the subject of verse 27, but this text is not given in whole within the article. Here is the passage,

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many  
for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall

cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”  
(Daniel 9:27 KJV)

– The covenant that Jesus established did not begin at his baptism, as suggested in this article, but was established when he was sacrificed for our sins on the cross. The covenant mentioned in verse 27 is one that will be confirmed by a future Roman leader, and does not in any way refer to Jesus Christ.

– The covenant that Jesus established did make the Temple sacrifices unimportant in God’s eyes, but Christ’s Covenant is an eternal Covenant that will never expire, and not the temporary seven-year covenant predicted by Daniel.

– One of the subjects of this verse is the abomination which shall make desolate. Jesus himself mentioned this event as one which would take place *at the very end of the age* prior to his Second Coming (Matthew 24:15-21). Jesus stated that the abomination of desolation would be seen in the future near the very end of the age, and therefore the seventieth week of Daniel could not have been fulfilled in the past.

7. This article states that the 490-year period of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks was a “probationary period” for Israel during which she had the option to repent. The end of the Seventy Weeks is given as 34 AD when Stephen was stoned by Jewish leaders.

According to this article if Israel had repented at any time during the three and a half years after Jesus was killed, the nation would have been forgiven. This possibility is contradicted by Jesus himself, who stated that Israel’s rejection of Him in 30 AD was an *unpardonable sin* committed by *that generation*, which could never be forgiven (Matthew 12:25-37).

Prior to Jesus’ entrance to Jerusalem at Passover he wept



over the city, because he knew that there was nothing that could be done to alleviate the judgment that had already been made against the city and against Israel (Luke 19:42-44).

The leaders of Israel had ruled against Jesus, and against his Messianic claims, and immediately afterward Jesus had predicted the punishment that would fall on Israel. There was no so-called “probationary period” left during which the nation as a whole could have possibly repented after Israel’s leaders had rejected Jesus as the Messiah. It was an unpardonable sin committed by that generation, and once it had been committed the punishment for that sin became inevitable. That punishment was the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred forty years later in 70 AD.

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel were not given as a conditional prophecy. The prophecy was given as proof that God knows the beginning and the end, and while mankind enjoys free will God still knows ahead of time what we, exercising our free will, will choose. While God may set conditions, He already knows whether or not those conditions will be met.

The seventieth week of Daniel is most definitely in mankind’s future. After the true followers of Jesus Christ are taken to heaven at the rapture God will turn back to Israel and the Seventieth Week will begin. Once again Israel, the Jews and the city of Jerusalem will be the focus of His attention.

The main purpose of the Day of the Lord and the end-times tribulation period is not for God to pour out his wrath on the world and inflict random plagues and catastrophes on unbelievers. No, it is to bring His people, the nation that rejected Him almost two thousand years ago, back to repentance and acceptance of Him. When Israel as a nation finally turns back to their God and accepts the Messiah Jesus Christ as their own, then the end will come. After the Second Coming the basis of the Seventy Weeks will then and only then be fulfilled,

“...to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.”

## Appendix II:

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### A Critique of Popular Prophetic Models

**A**mong the many different views out there regarding the proper way to interpret the end-times prophecies of the Bible there are only a few that allow for the development of a systematic chronology of events. Such chronologies are usually based upon two premises: the distinction between the Church and Israel, and the future fulfillment of the Seventieth Week of Daniel 9:27. These two premises are largely accepted throughout the evangelical Church, especially in the United States, and the general foundation that is established by these premises allows for the placement of the specific events predicted in the book of Revelation and throughout the Bible.

Over the years many scholars have developed prophetic “scenarios” or “models” detailing how and when these specific events will be fulfilled chronologically. Today there are at least two major prophetic models that enjoy widespread acceptance throughout the evangelical Church, at least in the United States. They are the “Pre-Tribulation Rapture” model and the “Pre-Wrath Rapture” model. The chronological scenario introduced in this book can be referred to as the “Red Moon Rapture” model to distinguish it from the Pre-Trib

and Pre-Wrath models.

The timing of the Rapture in relation to the seventieth week is the crucial issue when it comes to these two models. What sets them apart is the fact that the Pre-Trib model places the Rapture of the Church *prior to* the “seven-year Tribulation” (which is simply used as another term for the seventieth week), whereas the Pre-Wrath model places the Rapture at a point far into the *second half* of the seven-year tribulation. The differences in the various interpretations that are offered to support each model have led to serious and heated debate that has taken place between Bible scholars, within Churches and families, and also throughout the internet in the many prophecy discussion groups that have emerged over the years.

As a student of Bible prophecy I believe that one of the main reasons for the continued debate between the Pre-Trib and Pre-Wrath camps is the fact that each of these models is based from the beginning on a fundamental chronological error. That error is the placement of the beginning of the seventieth week at the opening of the first Seal of Revelation. The Red Moon Rapture model, as put forth in chapter six, attempts to remedy this error by placing the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel at a point after the Magog invasion of Israel, sometime after the first Trumpet judgment of Revelation. From this starting point the obvious errors which fuel the never-ending debates between the Pre-Trib and Pre-Wrath camps can be avoided.

The erroneous placement of the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel at the opening of the first Seal seems to have been made largely out of convenience, rather than for any solid or conclusive Biblical reasons. The first Seal appears to mark the beginning of the end-times events in Revelation, and the seventieth week is the seven-year timeline that culminates with the Second Coming, so equating the first Seal with the start of the seventieth week may have

seemed like a natural thing for prophecy scholars to do.

However, just because it *seems* natural does not make it *Biblical*. If all of the prophetic sources are examined and compared, including Daniel, Jesus, Paul and the book of Revelation, then we find that there are three starting points that need to be accounted for in any prophetic chronology. These are the beginning of birth pangs, the beginning of the Day of the Lord, and the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel.

The birth pangs are mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24:7-8, and they begin with a great war involving many nations and kingdoms. According to Jesus, after the great war the birth pangs continue with a gradual increase of famines, plagues and earthquakes in various places.

On the other hand, the Day of the Lord is predicted by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 to come like a “*thief in the night*” with “*sudden destruction*.” It does not begin gradually or with a buildup of intensity, but with a sudden and catastrophic demonstration of the wrath of God. Jesus, like Paul, compares the onset of the Day of the Lord with the coming of a “*thief in the night*” (Matthew 24:43) and Jesus compares its intensity to the Flood of Noah (Matthew 24:37). Both Jesus and Paul describe the Rapture as a rescue and an escape from the destruction that the Day of the Lord will bring (Luke 21:36, 1 Thessalonians 5:9 and 1:10).

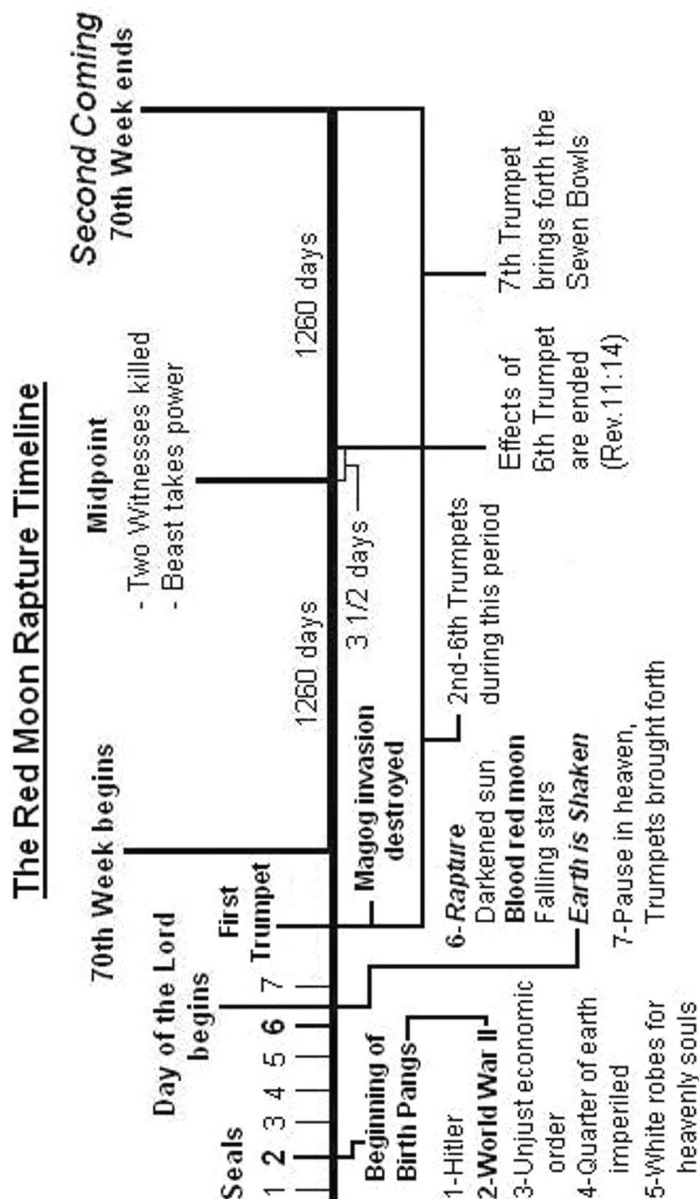
The beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel is harder to characterize. The Bible does not equate it with the beginning of the birth pangs, or with the beginning of the Day of the Lord. All we are told is that it will involve a covenant made between Israel and an authority based in Rome.

The Pre-Trib model begins its chronology of events with the opening of the first Seal, which is said to also mark both the beginning of the Day of the Lord *and* the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel. The birth pangs and the Rapture are then both placed at a point *prior to* the first Seal

within the Pre-Trib chronology.

The Pre-Wrath model also begins its chronology with the opening of the first Seal. Like the Pre-Trib model the Pre-Wrath model concludes that the first Seal marks the starting point of the seventieth week. The Pre-Wrath model equates the first four Seals with the birth pangs described by Jesus in Matthew 24:5-8 and concludes that these events take place within the *first half* of the seventieth week. However, the Pre-Wrath model places both the Rapture and the beginning of the Day of the Lord at a point far into the *second half* of the seventieth week.

The Red Moon Rapture chronology developed in this book takes into account the beginning of birth pangs, the beginning of the Day of the Lord, and the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel. These three events are all understood as having separate starting points on the timeline of the Apocalypse, as the chart on the next page illustrates.



Jesus clearly stated (Matthew 24:7-8) that the first *visible* birth pang that would indicate the approach of the end-times would be a great war. That war is understood as World War II and is equated with the *second* Seal.

The first Seal is understood to represent the brief career of the seventh Satanic king (Revelation 17:10), which was Adolf Hitler. The rise of Hitler was not mentioned by Jesus as the first *visible* birth pang simply because Hitler's influence from Satanic and occult sources did not become known until after World War II began and after Hitler's genocidal plan to exterminate the Jews became operative. In fact, the established Christian Church in Germany supported Hitler and Christian opponents of Hitler were suppressed, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who became a martyr for his beliefs when he was executed in the final months of the war.

In heaven the birth pangs of the Apocalypse began with the opening of the first Seal (representing Hitler who, from the beginning of his career, set out "*as a conqueror bent on conquest*"), but on earth the birth pangs became *observable* only with the opening of the second Seal that symbolized the beginning of World War II.

The birth pangs are represented in the book of Revelation by the Four Horsemen of the first four Seals and the Red Moon Rapture chronology places their fulfillment prior to the beginning of the Day of the Lord, prior to the seventieth week, and prior to the Rapture.

The Day of the Lord begins at a point in Revelation that is much easier to identify. According to Joel it is preceded by a darkened sun and a blood red moon (Joel 2:31), according to Paul it begins with "*sudden destruction*" (1 Thessalonians 5:3), and according to Isaiah it will involve a massive shaking of the entire earth (Isaiah 2:10-21). These characteristics all find their fulfillment with the events associated with the sixth Seal of Revelation, after which the unbelievers on the earth cry out that the Day of the Lord has



begun (Revelation 6:17).

The Rapture is predicted to precede the Day of the Lord, and the Red Moon Rapture model places it at the same time as, or a little bit before, the initial signs of the sixth Seal, one of which is the sign of the **blood red moon**. The outcome of the Rapture is described in Revelation 7:9-17 when the great multitude of believers are shown in heaven standing before Jesus and before the throne of God.

Within the Red Moon Rapture chronology the beginning of the Day of the Lord is equated with the events surrounding the invasion of Israel described in Ezekiel 38-39. This is one of the strong points of the Red Moon Rapture model, because a reason is clearly given for God's wrathful intervention into human affairs:

**The catastrophic end-time events of the Apocalypse begin when God is forced to act to save His people and His nation from imminent extinction at the hands of an overwhelming invading force.**

Both the Pre-Trib and Pre-Wrath models lack such a clear explanation for God's long-delayed but decisive intervention into the affairs of humankind.

After God intervenes to save Israel, then Israel will make its covenant with the Roman authority, which will mark the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel. However, instead of placing this event at the opening of the first Seal, the Bible offers a great deal of evidence and support for placing it at a point after the birth pangs, after the Rapture, and after the beginning of the Day of the Lord. That point would have to fall after the destruction of the Magog invasion which comes through the judgment of the first Trumpet, and it corresponds with the seven years that follow the Magog invasion mentioned in Ezekiel 39:9.

This has been a basic overview of the Red Moon Rapture

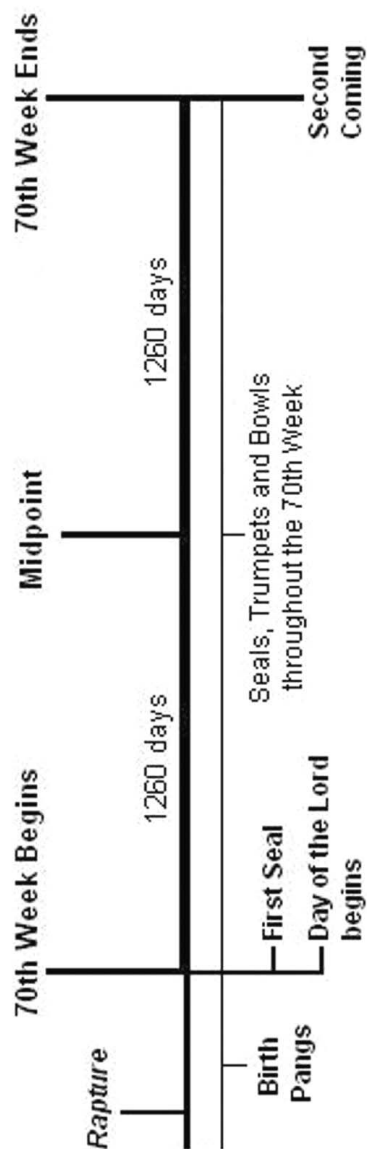
model as it compares with the Pre-Trib and Pre-Wrath models commonly accepted today. The rest of this appendix will now focus on a more in-depth critique of these two popular prophetic scenarios.

## **The Pre-Tribulation Rapture**

The most important conclusion put forth by the Pre-Trib Rapture position is that the Church will be gathered up and taken to heaven prior to the end-times Tribulation and prior to the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel. The Red Moon Rapture model developed in this book agrees with this most important conclusion, and therefore in actuality the Red Moon model can also be called a “Pre-Trib” model.

The most important differences, however, have to do with the placement of the Rapture, the Day of the Lord, and the seventieth week of Daniel within the sequence of Seals, Trumpets and Bowls given in Revelation. A chart of the most commonly accepted Pre-Tribulation Rapture chronology is shown on the next page.

### The Pre-Tribulation Rapture Timeline



## **The Twenty-Four Elders**

The foundational Pre-Trib position has always been that the twenty-four elders who are shown in heaven prior to the opening of the first Seal represent the entire body of believers known as the Church. It is argued that if there are twenty-four saved members of humanity alive and in heaven prior to the opening of the first Seal, then the entire Church must also be present with them in heaven as well. The Pre-Trib view states that the Rapture and Resurrection will take place prior to the opening of the first Seal, either prior to, or at the same time as, the moment when John's vision of heaven begins in Revelation chapter four.

There are several Biblical texts that create problems for this view. First, there is the promise that Jesus gave concerning the rapture,

“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”  
(Luke 21:34-36)

Jesus clearly states that those who are raptured, who escape the Day of the Lord, will then stand before Jesus. Compare that promise to the description of the twenty-four elders as John first sees them,

“Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns

of gold on their heads.” (Revelation 4:4)

Those raptured will be standing, but the twenty-four elders are sitting. Some may dismiss this point as overly technical and irrelevant, but there is more to the promise Jesus made than merely the *posture* of the saints. Jesus also said that those rescued at the rapture would immediately find themselves in the presence of the Son of Man. The Apostle Paul gives this promise as well,

“According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. **And so we will be with the Lord forever.** Therefore encourage each other with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)

When Paul speaks of “*the Lord*,” he is referring to Jesus. Jesus will come down from heaven, enter the earth’s atmosphere, and take up all of the living believers into the clouds. Paul then says that after this occurs believers will be “*with the Lord forever*.” Raptured believers will first be with Jesus in the clouds, then they will be with Jesus in heaven, standing “*before the Son of Man*,” then believers will live with Jesus on the earth for the millennium of peace after the Tribulation, and finally believers will be with Jesus throughout the eternal age that is described in Revelation 21. *The Church will never be apart from Jesus after the Rapture.*

The twenty-four elders cannot be representatives of the

Church because they are shown in heaven throughout Revelation chapter four during a time when Jesus is not present. Chapter five then begins when God the Father is shown with the seven-sealed scroll. An angel asks the question, “*Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?*” The immediate answer is that nobody is found worthy to take the scroll and open it. No one in heaven, no one on earth, and no one in hell under the earth. Jesus is nowhere to be found. Finally, after John weeps and weeps for some time at this hopeless situation, he is roused from his mourning and told that Jesus has triumphed. Jesus is then shown in heaven for the very first time, as a Lamb that had been slain. The twenty-four elders then proclaim,

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.” (Revelation 5:9)

So why was no one found worthy to open the scroll, throughout all creation, when the scroll was first shown in the hand of God the Father? There is only one explanation that even attempts to answer this question. We know that John went *forward* in time and saw the events that will take place at the end of the age, so the only reasonable answer is that John also went *back* in time, to a time prior to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

It was the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ that purchased men for God and made Jesus Christ worthy to take the scroll. If John’s vision began at any time after the crucifixion then a worthy Jesus would have been immediately found. After the crucifixion Jesus descended to hell and set the captives free from Sheol, then he was resurrected and reappeared on the earth, and then after that he ascended to heaven. Yet the angel who speaks out at the beginning of

Revelation 5 says that a search was made in heaven, on earth and in hell, and no one was found who was worthy. John must have first journeyed back to a time *prior to* the crucifixion because only then would no one have been found worthy in heaven, hell, or on the earth.

If John first traveled back in time, to a time prior to the crucifixion, then the twenty-four elders could not be the Church. But then who could they be? The Bible tells us that God has intervened to save and glorify several of His faithful servants throughout history. We know that Enoch, Elijah and Moses are all alive and in heaven and that God chose them to be at His side throughout history. The Bible does not mention any other specific saints who are in heaven, but this does not mean that He has not chosen others in addition to Enoch, Elijah and Moses. The twenty-four elders who are shown in heaven prior to the appearance of Jesus and prior to the opening of the first seal, may indeed be a unique group of saints from ages past, who, though unnamed, now live with God and serve Him in heaven, watching over bowls of sweet incense which are the prayers of believers today.

The theory that John first went back in time is the best possible explanation for the fact that John was there at a time when no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll. However, this idea can be rejected based on the invitation that John hears prior to his entrance to heaven. John hears, *“Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”* On the basis of this text it is argued that what John sees can only be future events, and travel back in time is ruled out. If this argument is valid, then we are left without a good possible answer as to why no one was found worthy to open the scroll at a time after the crucifixion. If this argument is in fact correct, and John witnesses only future events, then there still exists another plausible alternative for who the twenty-four elders might represent:

Matthew recorded what happened at the moment of the

death of Jesus Christ while he was nailed to the cross,

“At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.” (Matthew 27:51-53)

The twenty-four heavenly elders might also be the select group of Old Testament saints who were resurrected from their graves at the moment Christ triumphed through his death.

The point that must be understood is that there are several conceivable possibilities for the identity of Revelation’s twenty-four elders. Identifying them as the Church is not a good option and neither is it the only option.

### **The Martyrs of the Fifth Seal and the Great Multitude**

Within the Pre-Trib chronology of events the first four Seals are understood to represent events that will take place during the first half of the seventieth week, beginning with the rise of the Antichrist, the eighth king of Revelation 17:11, who is associated with the first Seal.

Continuing in this method of interpretation the fifth Seal is then viewed as a description of a specific campaign of persecution against Christian believers. After the sixth Seal is opened then Revelation gives a description of a great multitude in heaven, and the Pre-Trib position is that this great multitude of saints are believers who have perished from the persecution that began with the fifth Seal during this early period of the Tribulation.



The Pre-Trib interpretations of the meaning of the fifth Seal and the identity of the great multitude are both suspect for a number of reasons:

1. The fifth Seal does not *describe* a specific campaign of global persecution against believers. It merely reveals the fact that throughout history many believers have died in the past for their faith, while at the same time it *predicts* a further persecution of believers. This prediction of a global persecution of believers is also made by Jesus who says it will occur after the birth pangs at the beginning of the Tribulation itself in Matthew 24:9. These predictions are fulfilled not by the great multitude of Revelation 7, but instead in the words of Revelation 14:12-13 and by the description of the pre-millennial resurrection in Revelation 20:4: *“And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God... They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”*

2. The great multitude of Revelation 7 cannot be the same group of alleged “Tribulation martyrs” that are shown in the fifth Seal, because the fifth Seal martyrs are first shown without white robes, while the great multitude wears white robes. Furthermore, the martyrs are shown existing under the altar, while the great multitude stands before God’s throne and serves Him day and night. The change that occurs to believers in heaven, from being deceased souls under the altar without white robes, to being pictured as alive in front of the throne wearing white robes and serving God, can only be explained by means of the Rapture and Resurrection occurring sometime between Revelation 6:11 and 7:9.

3. John had no problem identifying the martyrs of the fifth seal as deceased “souls.” If the great multitude are members of the exact same group of deceased martyrs then why does John decline to guess who they are in Revelation 7:14? John’s ignorance as to their identity may be a mystery, but if it tells us anything it tells us that the great multitude cannot

be members of the same group that he easily identified beforehand.

4. According to the Pre-Trib chronology the Rapture of the Church occurs prior to the opening of the first Seal of Revelation. Imagine for a moment how the raptured and resurrected Church would appear in heaven and how it could be described:

It would appear as a great multitude from every nation, race and language; it would be standing before Jesus in fulfillment of Luke 21:36; it would be described as having been taken away from the Day of the Lord or from the Great Tribulation; and it would be described in terms fulfilling Jesus' prediction of John 14:1-3 that he would one day return to take believers with him to heaven, to live at his Father's house for a period of time. The obvious question for the persistent advocate of the Pre-Trib Rapture scenario is *why then is this exact description given after the sixth Seal of Revelation, rather than prior to the first Seal?*

## **The Day of the Lord**

According to the Pre-Trib prophetic model the Day of the Lord begins with the opening of the first Seal, which is viewed as the appearance of the Antichrist on the global stage and the beginning of his rise to assert total global power. The next event is the second Seal which is viewed as a major war near the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation.

The problem with the Pre-Trib view is that neither of these events fulfill what Jesus and Paul predicted about the way in which the Day of the Lord would begin. Where is the wrath of God? Where is the sudden destruction? Furthermore, if Isaiah and Joel are taken into account, where is the shaking of the earth and where is the darkening of the sun and the blood red moon? There is absolutely no Biblical

evidence whatsoever that supports the contention that the Day of the Lord begins with the opening of the first Seal. All of this evidence is concentrated instead around the sixth Seal, as the Red Moon Rapture model maintains.

The Pre-Trib explanation for the fact that mankind clearly cries out in Revelation 6:17 that the Day of the Lord has just begun, is that while mankind may realize at this point that the Day of the Lord is upon them, this does not rule out the possibility that it could have initially begun earlier with the opening of the first Seal. This creates the idea that the Day of the Lord begins secretly and is at first unrecognized by humanity for what it truly is.

The Red Moon Rapture model is much more specific when it comes to the events surrounding the beginning of the Day of the Lord. It will not begin gradually, and there is not a period of God's secret wrath. The earth will not have time to react to the Rapture that will cause millions of believers to vanish, because other events will quickly take precedence. The Day of the Lord will begin with the catastrophic shaking of the planet earth, but is immediately preceded by the Rapture. There will not be an undefined time period between the Rapture and the Day of the Lord, to allow those left behind to quietly ponder what has happened. The Rapture is a rescue, and those taken make an escape. Those left behind will be immediately plunged into chaos when the wrath of God is poured out with the onset of the Day of the Lord.

## **Imminence**

The doctrine of "Imminence" is a Pre-Trib teaching that concerns the Rapture of the Church. It is taught that the Rapture is "imminent" and could occur at any moment; that the Bible gives no explicit sign or signs that *must* precede

the Rapture; and that therefore believers must be ready for it to occur at any moment, perhaps even *right now!*

While it is true that there are no signs that are explicitly predicted to precede the Rapture, there are a number of signs that are predicted to precede the Day of the Lord. These include the sign of the darkened sun and blood red moon (Joel 2:31), the sign of the appearance of Elijah (Malachi 4:5), and the sign of the revealing of the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Because of this fact the Pre-Trib strategy has been to distance the Rapture from the Day of the Lord, and create an undefined period of time between the two events. In this way Pre-Trib advocates can maintain the doctrine of “Imminence” by saying that the signs that precede the Day of the Lord *may or may not* be seen before the Rapture, and that the Rapture could still occur *at any moment*.

The Red Moon Rapture model, while accepting the conclusion that the Rapture will occur prior to the end-times Tribulation (Pre-Trib), is not dependent or even necessarily supportive of the doctrine of “Imminence” regarding the Rapture of the Church.

The Pre-Trib position that the Rapture is unconnected with the beginning of the Day of the Lord appears to be contradicted by the words of Jesus and of Paul. Here is what Paul has to say,

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not

need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, 'Peace and safety,' destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."  
(1 Thessalonians 4:16-5:9)

Paul begins by talking specifically about the Rapture when living believers will be taken bodily up into heaven, and then he directly connects this event with the Day of the Lord. In this passage Paul echoes a number of themes that Jesus taught directly to his disciples about both the Rapture and the coming of the Day of the Lord in his Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21:5-36.

In Matthew 24:36 Jesus said, concerning the "coming of the Son of Man," that "*No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*" Paul echoes this by stating that concerning the Day of the Lord, "*about times and dates we do not need to write to you...*"

In Matthew 24:43-44 Jesus said,

"But understand this: If the owner of the house

had known at **what time of night the thief was coming**, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because **the Son of Man will come** at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Paul echoes this statement of Jesus that concerns the “*coming*” of the Son of Man by connecting it with the Day of the Lord saying that “*you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.*”

In Matthew 24:38 Jesus explained that prior to his return for the Church life on earth will be like it was prior to the Flood of Noah. In Luke 21:34 Jesus continued with this theme by explaining that prior to his return the primary temptations that believers will face will be the temptations of “*dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life.*” Paul echoes this by saying that prior to the Day of the Lord people will be saying “*peace and safety,*” and he also points out while those in darkness will be getting drunk, those in Christ will remain “*alert and self-controlled.*”

Jesus described the events that would lead up to the Day of the Lord as “*birthpangs*” in Matthew 24:8, while Paul spoke of the onset of the Day of the Lord “*as labor pains on a pregnant woman.*”

Jesus said that the Day of the Lord would come “*unexpectedly like a trap*” and that believers should watch and pray so that they might escape it, while Paul says that the Day of the Lord will come “*suddenly*” and that unbelievers “*will not escape.*”

With all of these similarities between the words of Jesus and the words of Paul, and Paul’s connection of the “*coming of the Son of Man*” with the beginning of the Day of the Lord, it becomes clear that the distinction and/or separation made within the Pre-Tribulation model between the Rapture and the Day of the Lord is almost entirely artificial.

The very purpose of the Rapture is to protect believers from the Day of the Lord's wrath, just as Paul said that "*God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Once the Rapture occurs and God's children are protected then there will be no reason for God to delay with the outpouring of His wrath upon a world left only with unbelievers.

Within the Red Moon Rapture chronology the beginning of the Day of the Lord is connected with the shaking of the earth of Revelation 6:14 after the opening of the sixth Seal. The sixth Seal events that precede the shaking of the earth include the sign of the darkened sun and blood red moon that was predicted in Joel 2:31 to precede the Day of the Lord. Within this chronology the Rapture is viewed as taking place after the opening of the sixth Seal, but before the shaking of the earth. This would place the Rapture at the same time as, or immediately before, the sign of the blood red moon. It is conceivable that the other two signs that must precede the Day of the Lord (the revealing of the Antichrist and the appearance of Elijah), might also occur at this time, either after, before, or at the same time as the Rapture. In this case, the explicit signs that must precede the Day of the Lord continue to have an undefined relationship with the moment of the Rapture.

There may be no signs given in the Bible that are explicitly stated to precede the Rapture, but perhaps there are some signs that may be deduced implicitly that must precede the Rapture. If any such signs exist then they almost certainly have to do with the nation of Israel, and with Israel's situation in the years leading up to the Magog invasion of Ezekiel 38-39, which brings forth God's intervention in human affairs and the Day of the Lord's wrath. One of these preliminary signs may be the destruction of Damascus according to Isaiah 17, but even this cannot be stated for certain.

For a final conclusion regarding the Pre-Trib doctrine of

“Imminence,” I must say that I remain unconvinced either for or against it. Whatever the case may be Jesus himself gives specific instruction about what believers are to prepare for, and how they are to prepare. In Luke 21:36 He said simply to watch and pray:

*“Be always on the **watch, and pray** that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”*

## The Pre-Wrath Rapture

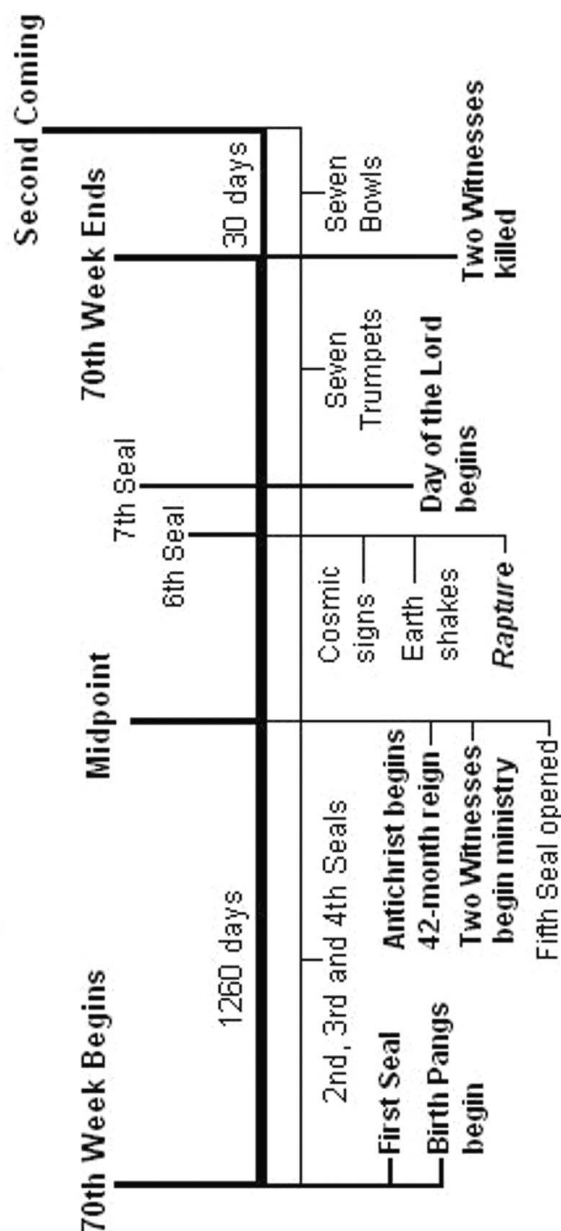
The development of the Pre-Wrath Rapture prophetic model can only be viewed as a positive development in the history of prophecy scholarship. Its basic premise is that the Church will be raptured prior to the Day of the Lord’s wrath, and with this premise the Red Moon Rapture is in agreement and can also be viewed as basically a “Pre-wrath” model.

Additionally, the Pre-Wrath scenario looks to the sixth Seal for evidence of the Day of the Lord, and views the great multitude of Revelation 7 that is pictured after the sixth Seal as the raptured Church in heaven. With these points the Red Moon Rapture model is also in agreement.

The problems arise, however, with the Pre-Wrath placement of the midpoint of the seventieth week of Daniel within Revelation’s sequence of the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls, and in the Pre-Wrath’s placement of the sixth Seal within the timeline of the seventieth week of Daniel. The midpoint of the seventieth week is placed either between the third and fourth Seals, or between the fourth and fifth Seals, and the sixth Seal is placed at a point far into the second half of the seventieth week. In the next few pages we will examine and refute these major errors that exist within the Pre-Wrath chronology, illustrated on the chart on the next page.



## The Pre-Wrath Rapture Timeline



## **The Signs**

One of the first problems found within the Pre-Wrath chronology stems from equating the cosmic signs mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24:29 with the cosmic signs that take place after the opening of the sixth Seal of Revelation. They are certainly similar, but this does not mean that they are necessarily the same:

Matthew 24:29 – “Immediately after the distress of those days ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’”

Revelation 6:12-14 – “I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.”

The fact that is not considered within the Pre-Wrath model is that there are actually two cosmic disturbances within the timeline of the Apocalypse. The sixth Seal describes the first, whereas the second cosmic disturbance is associated with the fifth and seventh Bowl judgments at the very end of Revelation:

“The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness... The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air... Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe

earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake... Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.” (Revelation 16:10-21)

This final disturbance is *also* similar to the one mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24:29. The disturbance described by Jesus is to come *after* the most terrible time of the tribulation the world has ever seen, and it makes sense that it would then come *at the end* of the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls, rather than at the beginning when mankind cries out that the Day of the Lord has just *begun*.

The idea that Matthew 24:29 describes the *last* cosmic disturbance of Revelation, rather than the *first* is supported by the fact that Matthew 24:30 goes on to describe the visible appearance of Jesus Christ returning on the clouds of heaven. Jesus makes no such appearance in connection with the sixth Seal, but he certainly does after the seventh Bowl, an appearance described in Revelation 19:11-16.

Matthew 24:29 is better equated with the final cosmic disturbance of the Apocalypse, whereas the sixth Seal is better equated with the disturbance that comes as a result of the Magog invasion of Israel, which itself precedes a specific seven-year period that the Red Moon Rapture model equates with the seventieth week of Daniel. Here is Ezekiel’s disturbance, which remains unaccounted for in the Pre-Wrath chronology:

“This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign LORD. In my zeal

and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground.” (Ezekiel 38:18-20)

Another point that separates the post-tribulation cosmic disturbance of Matthew 24:29 from the sixth Seal disturbance is the fact that Jesus describes a complete darkness, including the darkening of the moon, whereas the sixth Seal describes a moon that appears red like blood.

Throughout Bible prophecy all of the predictions of a completely darkened moon (Isaiah 13:10, Joel 2:10, Joel 3:15, Matthew 24:29, and Revelation 16:10) place it within or at the very end of the Day of the Lord. On the other hand, only the blood red moon is specifically predicted to come *before* the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:31).

It makes little sense to equate the darkened moon mentioned by Jesus that occurs “*after the distress of those days*” with the blood red moon of the sixth Seal that involves the *beginning* of the Day of the Lord (“For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” – Revelation 6:17).

## The Day of the Lord

Perhaps the main reason for equating the disturbance of Matthew 24:29 with the sixth Seal is that the primary Pre-Wrath goal is to promote a chronology that has the Church enduring the majority of the seven-year Tribulation on earth before being raptured to heaven.

By equating Matthew 24:29 with the sixth Seal the Pre-

Wrath model can go a step further and equate the post-tribulation “gathering of the elect” of Matthew 24:31 with the Rapture of the Church and the appearance of the great multitude in heaven after the sixth Seal.

Within the Red Moon Rapture model the Rapture is placed at the beginning of the sixth Seal events, and the Day of the Lord is viewed as beginning with the fifth of the sixth Seal’s five events, which is the shaking of the earth described in 6:14. After the earth is shaken then mankind reacts by running to the hills and caves and crying out in fright that the Day of the Lord has begun.

The Pre-Wrath view, by erroneously equating the events during and after the sixth Seal with Matthew 24:29-31, is forced to change this clear sequence of events from “Rapture-Cosmic Signs-Day of the Lord” to “Cosmic Signs-Rapture-Day of the Lord.” This change is necessary because Matthew 24:29-31 clearly places the cosmic signs *before* the “gathering of the elect.” The end result is that according to the Pre-Wrath view the Day of the Lord cannot begin *within* the sixth Seal, but must instead begin with the opening of the seventh Seal after the raptured Church is shown in heaven in Revelation 7.

The problem that arises with this interpretation stems from the Pre-Wrath explanation for the words and actions of mankind after the 6:14 event. If the Day of the Lord does not begin until the seventh Seal of 8:1 then why do the unbelievers react with such fear and terror and cry out that the Day of the Lord has begun after the 6:14 event? The Pre-Wrath explanation is that the words “has come” or “is come” in 6:17, which is the Greek verb *elthen*, a derivative of the word *erchomai*, can be translated as “is about to come” or “is soon to come” because *elthen* appears in the Greek aorist tense. In other words, Pre-Wrath advocates interpret Revelation 6:17 as “*For the great day of their wrath is about to come, and who can stand?*”

The above interpretation is certainly a grammatical *possibility*, but what about context, and what about the usage of the very same word, in the very same tense, throughout the rest of the book of Revelation? The fact is that the same word is used in the exact same way eleven other times in the book of Revelation, and all of them, without exception, are translated either in the *past* or *present tense* and never in the *future tense* (5:7, 7:13, 8:3, 11:18, 14:7, 14:15, 17:1, 17:10, 18:10, 19:7, 21:9).

This argument could degenerate into a tedious debate between opposing camps of Greek language experts, but thankfully that is not necessary. Jesus and the Apostle Paul actually solve the dispute for us. According to the Pre-Wrath view the unbelievers on the earth cry out and react after the cosmic signs of the sixth Seal *in anticipation* of the Day of the Lord that is said to begin with the seventh Seal. This simply cannot be the case. Only *believers* will be prepared for the Day of the Lord, and only *believers* will be able to anticipate it. For unbelievers the Day of the Lord will be completely unexpected and they will be caught by surprise when it comes. *They will not have a chance to anticipate it.*

Jesus said that the Day of the Lord would come “*unexpectedly like a trap*” (Luke 21:34), and that it would come like a thief in the night (Matthew 24:43). Paul reiterates the very same thing saying that “*the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night,*” that “*destruction will come on them suddenly,*” but that for believers—for those not in darkness—*only for them* will the Day of the Lord not surprise them like a thief (1 Thessalonians 5:2-4). If this is the case, then the Pre-Wrath position that unbelievers will cry out and flee to the caves *in anticipation* of the Day of the Lord becomes impossible.

The bottom line is that when the unbelievers cry out and run away to the hills and caves after the earth-shaking events of the sixth Seal, they are doing so because of *what has just*

*happened*, or in response to *what is still happening*. In either case, the Day of the Lord can only be seen as beginning with Revelation 6:14, and not with the seventh Seal of Revelation 8:1 as maintained by the Pre-Wrath view.

Furthermore, if this is the case, then it becomes impossible to equate Matthew 24:29-31 with the events before, during and after the sixth Seal of Revelation. If the Day of the Lord begins with 6:14 then the Rapture must occur *before* that time. The sequence of the sixth Seal then becomes “Rapture—Cosmic Signs—Day of the Lord.” The sixth Seal then cannot be the same as the Pre-Wrath view of the sequence of Matthew 24:29-42 which is “Cosmic Signs—Rapture—Day of the Lord.”

## **The Gathering of the Elect**

This brings us to the Pre-Wrath premise that Matthew 24:31 is a description of the Rapture of the Church: “*And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*”

The Pre-Wrath position is that at this point the Day of the Lord is still in the future. However, this position becomes virtually impossible to maintain if Matthew 24:30 is addressed: “*At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.*”

If this Pre-Wrath premise is correct then it means that Jesus physically appears in the clouds of the sky *prior to* the Rapture and *prior to* the Day of the Lord. Yet Jesus said that these events, the cosmic signs, his glorious appearance, and the gathering of the elect, all come “*after the distress of those days*” (Matthew 24:29), which will be the most terrible time

of distress the world has ever or will ever experience.

The only remedy for this confusion is to understand that Jesus was not speaking about events *prior to* the Day of the Lord in Matthew 24:29-31, but rather of events surrounding his Second Coming at the *very end* of the Day of the Lord.

The first event is the cosmic sign of Matthew 24:29 which is also shown in Revelation with the blackout and cosmic disturbances of the fifth and seventh Bowls.

The second event (v.30) is the glorious appearance of Jesus Christ in the clouds of the sky, which is shown in Revelation 1:7, Revelation 19:11-16, as well as Zechariah 12:10.

The third event (v.31) is the final gathering of Israel's elect that occurs after the Second Coming and after the end of the seventieth week of Daniel. Keep in mind that the prophet Zechariah predicted that at the time of the end the people of Israel would be scattered "*to the four winds of heaven*" (2:6), and then compare the following descriptions of this final gathering of Israel's elect:

Isaiah 11:11-12 – "In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and **gather** the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from **the four quarters of the earth.**"

Isaiah 27:12-13 – "In that day the LORD will thresh from the flowing Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, O Israelites, will be **gathered up** one by one. And in that day **a great trumpet will sound**. Those who were perishing in Assyria and



those who were exiled in Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.”

Matthew 24:31 – “And he will send his angels with **a loud trumpet call**, and they will **gather** his elect **from the four winds**, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

### The Midpoint of the Seventieth Week of Daniel

One of the strongest points of the Red Moon Rapture chronology is its definitive placement of the midpoint of the seventieth week of Daniel between the sixth and seventh Trumpet judgments. The midpoint occurs on the day when the Two Witnesses are killed by the Antichrist (11:7) after their 1260-day ministry has *expired* (11:3), which is also the moment when the Antichrist’s forty-two month period of authority over the saints and over the entire world *begins* (13:5).

Within the Pre-Wrath chronology, however, the midpoint of the seventieth week is placed *prior to* the fifth Seal of Revelation. This is necessary to support the Pre-Wrath notion that the sixth Seal falls within the *second half* of the seventieth week, and that these events equate with the second-half events of Matthew 24:29-31. To uphold this chronology the Pre-Wrath view is forced to the conclusion that the 1260-day ministry of the Two Witnesses occurs entirely within the *second half* of the seventieth week as well.

This means that in the Pre-Wrath chronology the Two Witnesses and the Antichrist exercise their conflicting powers of authority during the exact same period of time. It also means that the Antichrist kills the Two Witnesses only *after* his forty-two months of power has expired, and it also places the three and a half days during which the bodies of the Two

Witnesses lie in the streets of Jerusalem *beyond* the end of the seventieth week of Daniel.

Prophecy scholars who believe in a future fulfillment of the seventieth week of Daniel are virtually unanimous that the Second Coming and the return of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem comes at the precise end of the seventieth week, and that this also marks the precise end of the Antichrist's career. Holding to what is by far a minority opinion Pre-Wrath scholars dispute this and lengthen the Day of the Lord by thirty days.

This lengthening is necessary because the effects of the sixth Trumpet end only after the resurrection of the Two Witnesses (11:14), and without a further period of time there would be no place on the Pre-Wrath chronology for the fulfillment of the seventh Trumpet and the seven Bowl judgments of Revelation. The basis of this thirty day lengthening is given as Daniel 12:11,

“From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.”

What Daniel tells us in this verse is that the abomination of desolation will remain in place for 1290 days, during which time there will be no daily sacrifices offered in the Temple. Each half of the seventieth week lasts for exactly 1260 days, or forty-two months. The seventieth week itself expires 1260 days after its midpoint, so Daniel 12:11 simply explains that the abomination will remain in place throughout the second half of the seventieth week and for thirty days beyond it. However, this does not become a valid basis for placing the return of Jesus thirty days after the end of the seventieth week, as the Pre-Wrath view tries to maintain.

Jesus Christ has to return at the end of the seventieth week, because only he can provide the necessary conditions

for it to end. Recall that there are six things that are completed with the end of the entire prophecy of the seventy weeks, according to Daniel 9:24:

“...to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.”

These things could not be completed with the Antichrist's kingdom still present on the earth, or with Jesus Christ still in heaven. The Antichrist's kingdom ends with the end of the seventieth week. He is given power only for forty-two months, not for forty-three. By the same token, Jesus Christ must be in control of Jerusalem and the Temple for the entire seventy week prophecy to be complete. There can be no lengthening of the Day of the Lord for thirty days after the end of the seventieth week.

Daniel says that the abomination remains in place for thirty days after the end of the seventieth week, yet Daniel 9:24 says that at the end of the seventieth week the “most holy” will be anointed. This refers to the Most Holy Place of the Temple. It is the room in which the Ark of the Covenant was kept, and the room that was entered only once a year by the Jewish High Priest on the Day of Atonement. Jesus Christ will cleanse and anoint this room when he returns at the precise end of the seventieth week.

But what about the abomination? Why does it remain in place for thirty more days? According to Jesus in Matthew 24:15 the abomination will be set up in the “Holy Place” of the Temple, which is the outer room of the Temple. The Antichrist's image will be set up in the Holy Place, but no one will dare enter the inner room, the Most Holy Place of the Temple.

A possible explanation for allowing the abomination to

remain in the outer room of the Temple for thirty days, even after the sacred inner room is cleansed and anointed by Jesus Christ our High Priest, is that it will remain as a symbol that will face the survivors of the Day of the Lord who will be gathered from the entire world outside of Jerusalem to be judged after the Second Coming. This judgment is described in two texts, one from the New Testament and one from the Old:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into

the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (Matthew 25:31-46)

"In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land." (Joel 3:1-2)

This judgment of every individual on the face of the earth will begin thirty days after the Second Coming, at which point the abomination will be removed from the Temple, and the judgment will last for forty-five days. The prophet Daniel implied a thirty-day period after the Second Coming in 12:11 when he mentioned the "1290 days," and in 12:12 he reveals a further period lasting an additional forty-five days that will involve the judgment of the nations:

**"Blessed is the one** who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days."

When Daniel says that those who reach the end are “blessed” he was referring to those who are judged worthy to enter the kingdom after the judgment of the “sheep and goats” has ended. Jesus said of these righteous survivors, *“Come, **you who are blessed** by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”*

A period of judgment that begins a short time after the Second Coming is also implied in two other Old Testament texts:

“In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days.” (Isaiah 24:21-22)

“The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.” (Daniel 7:12)

After the judgment is finished and the wicked have been separated from the righteous then mankind will enjoy a great feast (the big Bar-B-Q mentioned in the dedication at the beginning of this book). Preparation for the feast is noted in Revelation 19:9 but the best description is given by the prophet Isaiah (25:6-8):

**On this mountain the LORD Almighty  
will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples,  
a banquet of aged wine—  
the best of meats and the finest of wines.  
On this mountain he will destroy the shroud  
that enfolds all peoples,  
the sheet that covers all nations;  
he will swallow up death forever.  
The Sovereign LORD will wipe away  
the tears from all faces;  
he will remove the disgrace of his people  
from all the earth.  
The LORD has spoken.**





## *About the Author*

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**P**eter D. Goodgame is a carpenter who builds houses to support his wife and two children in their home in Kailua, Hawaii. Peter has had no theological training or indoctrination at the college level and holds no degrees, an inexperience which in some respects he views as an asset.

Despite his lack of academic training Peter has been a lay scholar of Bible prophecy for over ten years and since 1999 he has edited his website at [\*www.redmoonrising.com\*](http://www.redmoonrising.com). It has been a repository for Peter's writings that include his cutting edge perspective on Bible prophecy and his research into history, current events and spiritual trends such as the Kabbalah and the New Age. Over the years it has developed a small but loyal following of readers and this, his first book, has been long anticipated.